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Traits and stories of Anglo-Indian life

Henry Robert Addison

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TRAITS AND STORIES

OF

ANGLO-INDIAN LIFE.

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TRAITS & STORIES OF

ANGLO-INDIAN LIFE,

BY LIEUT. COL. ADDISON.

LONDON,
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1858.

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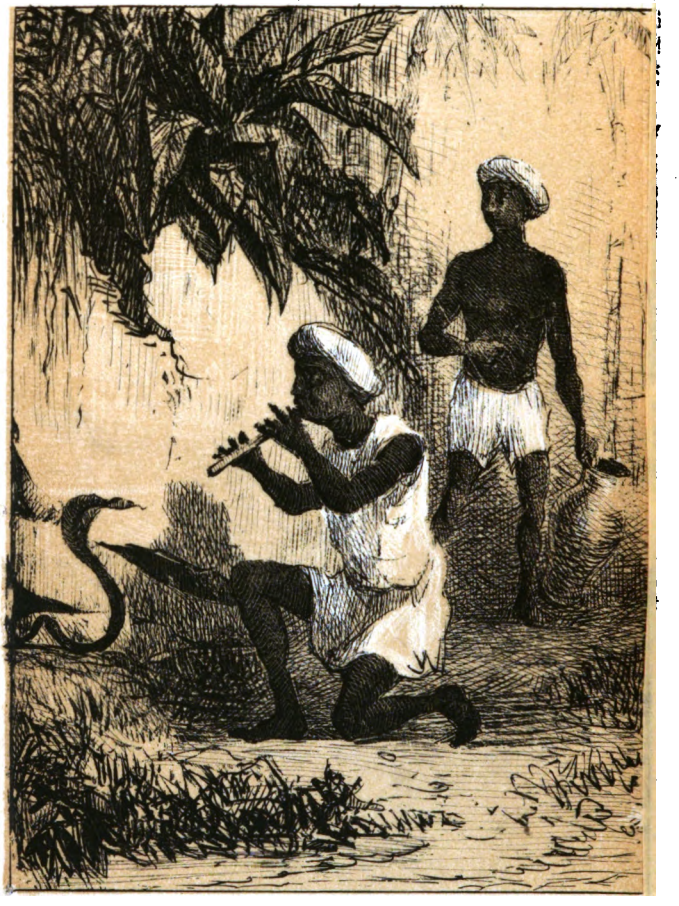

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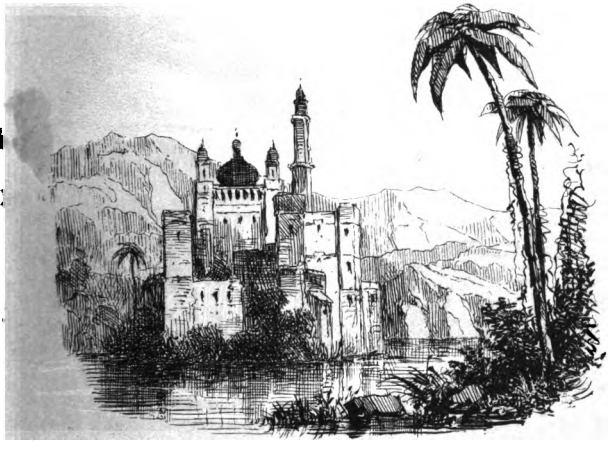

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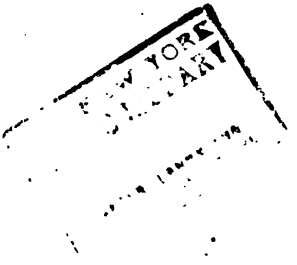
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TRAITS AND STORIES

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ANGLO-INDIAN LIFE.

BY

LIEUT.-COLONEL ADDISON,

AUTHOR OF "DIARY OF A JUDGE," "BELGIUM AS SHE IS," ETC.

WITH EIGHT ILLUSTRATIONS.

LONDON:

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TO

OCTAVIUS DELEPIERRE, LL.D., F.S.A.

My dear Delepierre,

Although the dedication of the following pages may be unworthy of your acceptance as a literary tribute, yet as a sincere mark of my friendship I hope they will find favour in your eyes.

Much yours,

HENRY R. ADDISON.

11, *Argyll Street, St. James's.*

Br. MAY 1910
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CONTENTS.

INTRODUCTION:	PAGE
APPROACH TO THE BAY OF BENGAL	7
MADRAS	12
THE BAY OF BENGAL	16
CALCUTTA	17
THE MUSSULAH BOAT	21
MY FIRST MORNING IN CALCUTTA	25
A NIGHT IN THE CALCUTTA HOTEL	36
PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES	44
TABLE TALK	49
A FIFTH AT WHIST	55
DELIGHTS OF BENGAL	58
THE SNAKE-CHARMER	65
A SUTTEE	72
DVENTURES OF A BLUE JACKET	78
FOR THE AGUE	84
KING INCIDENT	89
NEAR TO BE PLEASANT	96
E OF WRITER'S BUILDINGS	103
THE COUP DE SOLEIL	112
FIRE AND WATER	117
RUNNING A MUCK	122
A FACSIMILE	126
EXPECTATIONS	130
A FRIENDLY BET	136
THE LIONESS	139
ONE TOO MANY	144

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PAGE
STRANGE GAME 148
THE ADJUTANT 152
THE TANK 157
A NIGHT WELL SPENT 16
THE MICROSCOPE 16
THE WAHABEE ARABS 16
THE BOAR-HUNT 179
PLACING A NAWAB ON THE MUSNUD 183
A TRAITOR'S DOOM 190
MALAY VENGEANCE 195
A TIGER HUNT 202
THE SIRDAR 20
PLEASURES OF A TRIP IN A BUDGEROW 2
THE ENGLISH SOLDIER AND THE SEPOY 2
NOVEL REVENGE 2
INDIAN JEALOUSY 2
THE CENTIPEDE 2
FREEMASONRY IN INDIA 24
THE SCOFFER'S FATE 248
THE CRAMMED TURKEY 5
A GRIFFIN 2
THE NATIVE SENTINEL 2
THE PRACTICAL JOKE 2
THE BLACK PROPHET 2
THE BESIEGED 2

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PREFACE.

[illegible] of the following pages have already appeared [illegible]nt, and received the stamp of public approbation. [illegible]uthor has therefore collected them together, [illegible]having added a few more hitherto unpublished, [illegible]ures to put them forth as a series of desultory [illegible]ches, calculated to illustrate in an amusing manner [illegible] domestic manners and habits of Hindostan.

[illegible]ny one who has not been in India some of [illegible]se anecdotes will appear incredible, and be looked [illegible] as exaggerations; but in Calcutta they will be [illegible]d as truths, and in the society of that city many [illegible]se incidents which have come under their [illegible] scenes in which they have themselves [illegible], for every incident inserted in the following pages has really occurred.

The only deviation from absolute fact which may, perhaps, be cavilled at, is the necessary fiction, that in relating them the author has availed himself of the usual literary privilege of speaking of himself as the chief actor in the play.

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At a moment like the present, when India stands so prominently before us—when a recent and unhappy rebellion amongst certain classes has called for our particular attention and interest, even light sketches like these now given may not be altogether without their use. At the close of this struggle India will require a new organisation—a thorough regeneration. Thousands of our fellow countrymen will travel out there under the new phase of affairs, and to them a glimpse at the habits of their predecessors will not be without its utility.

Under these circumstances I venture to launch my little work, hoping that it may answer its avowed purpose, that of affording some insight into Anglo-Oriental manners.

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TALES AND STORIES

OF

ANGLO-INDIAN LIFE.

INTRODUCTION.

APPROACH TO THE BAY OF BENGAL.

We had been four days at sea without beholding land. Our old teak-built ship had lazily rolled about during four months, without even the exciting interest of a storm to break the monotony of our voyage, when, to the great delight of all aboard, the sight of a distant shore at length burst on us; so suddenly, indeed, that within half an hour of its first glimpse caught by the watchful seamen in the tops, we could define its shapes and nature. Our skipper declared it to be the island of Ceylon, and each now gazed with eager glance to catch some new feature of the eastern world, about

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to become his home. Few distinct notions could be formed, although some of a more fanciful imagination than the rest declared that they could plainly see elephants, boa constrictors, &c., with cocoa-nuts, palms, and other objects still more minute. I confess I myself saw little more than an apparent bank of clouds, in which, however, the more experienced eye of the sailor could doubtlessly distinguish a line of coast.

From our anxious gaze we were called away by the announcement of our dinner, which, I need scarcely add, takes place on board an Indiaman exactly at one o'clock. To this meal we sat down in better spirits than usual. The captain drank the health of the ladies, and they in return expressed their thanks and acknowledgments of the skill he had displayed in thus safely bringing them to their destination. High encomiums were added by many of the gentlemen, and all seemed delighted at thus having come to their journey's end. But, alas! such felicitations were destined to be of short duration. Ceylon is not Bengal, and the entrance to the bay by no means the conclusion of the voyage, or the termination of the danger which attends it.

In the midst of these joyous congratulations the first mate rushed in and beckoned out the captain. We naturally all rose and followed, but on reaching the deck there seemed little cause for alarm. The

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sun was shining brightly, the land visible, the ocean smooth. What could be the cause of this sudden alarm? The loud and agitated orders which the captain gave to shorten sail, for the life of me I could not make out. An old sailor took compassion on my ignorance.

"Do you see, sir, that little white cloud up yonder?"

"To be sure I do; but so small a speck on the clear blue sky cannot portend much mischief."

"But it does though. It's a white squall. See how fast it's coming!"

Before the man had time to finish the sentence the land was suddenly hid from us by a white mist, which came travelling over the surface of the sea at racehorse speed. On it came, boiling, howling, hissing; and in a little more time than I have taken to write these few lines our vessel was actually thrown over on her beam ends, while every loose article of furniture below, every stray cord or marlinespike on deck was thrown over, adding to the turmoil of the whistling wind, which bore us down with giant force. For several seconds we cowered before the blast; many thought their last hour was come; several of the sails, in the act of being taken in, were blown from their fastenings; the foresail split with the noise of thunder; a whirlwind inclosed us, and the maddened sea rushed clean over us.

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The accident to our foresail I firmly believe saved us. Relieved from its resistance to the wind, the old vessel slowly righted, and again we met the tempest. Two hands had been washed overboard; the others instantly set about the task of shortening sail. But almost before this could be effected—long, indeed, before the damages could be repaired—the squall had passed over, the sun was shining brightly, and we saw on our lee the terrors of Æolus flying from us in search of other prey. The broken cordage and split sails, the furniture destroyed, the bulkheads thrown down, but, above all, the loss of two of our brethren, alone remained to tell us that our vision of danger had been no idle chimera, and that the coast of Ceylon is more inviting than safe.

Shortly after this again we had a narrow escape. Our skipper was, alas! much addicted to saying pretty things to his fair passengers, and on the evening in question he was trying to make himself agreeable to a couple of young ladies going out on spec, who, nothing loth, were listening to his "soft nothings" as we sailed down the coast of Coromandel, when suddenly a voice was heard bellowing lustily, and in accents of fear, "Breakers ahead!" In a moment the captain was on the forecastle, and in another the direction of the vessel changed. We had been carelessly coasting along, making no allowance for a current which sets strongly in towards the shore, till suddenly we found

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ourselves within three hundred yards of the surf, which forms a triple barrier along this dangerous shore. We were off Pondicherry. Another quarter of an hour and, whirled within the vortex, we must have been stranded, and probably every soul on board lost. So much for our safe arrival in the Bay of Bengal.

A few days subsequently I was quietly walking the deck, striving to amuse myself by reading—an attempt in which I only partly succeeded, since, although we were out of sight of land, yet within a few hours' sail of Madras, anxiety prevented my thoughts from settling on the subject of the work before me—when suddenly I beheld, as I supposed, a being — black, naked, and shining—come suddenly over the side and jump upon deck. That he must have arisen from the depths of the ocean was evident: no coast, no vessel was within sight—no hail, no noise had announced his approach. I confess I was more than startled—I was frightened. This feeling soon changed to security when I saw several of our passengers press forward to the dingy mortal, and begin chattering with him in Hindostanee. Need I add that I was shocked and surprised when amongst the anxious crowds I beheld several ladies, whom I had hitherto looked upon as women of refinement? No blush tinted their cheek—no horror was depicted on their countenance as they approached the naked man, and interrogated him respecting the news on shore;

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for by this time I found that the strange creature before me was a catamaran, and that his partner, *i.e.*, the companion who sits on the same log, and assists in paddling it along, was lying to beneath our ship's quarter. Continually washed from their precarious perch, the catamarans, as in the present instance, frequently meet vessels before the land is even visible, and carry out to them in their little straw cap, their only article of clothing, letters from their friends, together with messages to be verbally delivered, and Indian chit-chat. But, as I shall allude to these gentry hereafter, as well as to mussulah boats, I shall here pass them over, and proceed to give a very slight sketch of Madras, where we landed the following day.

MADRAS.

Those who have never known the fear-inspiring situation of a passenger stowed away in a mussulah boat can hardly enter into my feelings when I was coolly thrown into one of these vessels for the purpose of proceeding to shore. Shut out from the view of the surrounding objects by the high sides, and the rowers above my head, the light material actually shuddering at the blow of every wave, I felt utterly helpless as I found myself knocked about by a series of tempestuous breakers, confused by the roar of the water

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and the frantic cries of the boatmen. I laid myself down in some alarm amidst a host of trunks and passengers, well aware that the chances were about equal whether I ever reached the strand in safety, or should have to swim for my life amidst a raging sea and a myriad of sharks. Heigho! it is a desperate chance, and never was I so delighted in my life as when I felt the frail bark rudely dragged on shore, and tilted over on one side to allow us to get out.

Here was a new scene, not less tiresome, but far more exciting than a disembarkation at Calais or Boulogne. We were surrounded by a host of turbaned blacks, all chattering, all pushing forward to secure our patronage. One man established himself as my guide, while another insisted on being my interpreter; a third constituted himself my umbrella bearer; a *sirdar*, or confidential valet, wished to take charge of my luggage, while half a dozen naked wretches vociferously called on me to enter their palanquins. Accustomed, however, to English habits, I determined to proceed on foot, and sturdily trudged on to the Madras hotel. Here I was scarcely seated when a thousand applications from servants out of place poured in upon me, some few Europeans anxious to learn the last news, and, lastly, a party of jugglers, who would not allow me quietly to sit down to the meal I had ordered till they had exhibited their powers before me. All this over, and

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somewhat refreshed by a more copious ablution in fresh water than I could possibly have indulged in on board our ship, I ordered a palanquin, and went round to present my several letters of introduction. Once or twice, however, during my trip I stopped the vehicle and got out, fancying the four men who bore me to be suffering pain. They indulge always in a short cry or song, strangely resembling the sigh of agony. This cry, they say, enables them to keep step. I own that to me it was remarkably annoying, pumped as it appeared to be from the very depth of their lungs; nor did I half relish the jolting motion, or enjoy the lazy posture I was now compelled to assume. Palanquin travelling may suit an old Anglo-Indian, but to a stranger it is anything but pleasant, and reminds one very much of an extra-sized coffin. But, as tastes may differ in this respect, I will at once proceed to a very short sketch of this eastern city.

Madras, which stands close upon the sea, is in itself divided into two towns, where commerce is carried on. In the better half a few Europeans live, an hotel is established, and some tolerable buildings are erected. The Black Town, or worse moiety, is wholly inhabited by natives. As a town Madras is, in itself, a wretched affair; but its esplanade is one of the most beautiful spots I ever beheld. Imagine a large park, with a centre drive leading to

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Fort St. George (where the troops are quartered), beautifully fringed by eastern trees, the grass far greener than in any other spot in our eastern dominions, the landscape backed in on the one side by a series of picturesque villas and splendid country residences, while on the other the wide ocean is visible, broken by the continually lashing surf, terrible to encounter, yet beautiful as an object from the shore. A sea breeze almost always fans the esplanade, and deludes the traveller, on his first landing, into a false belief that the climate here is one of the most perfect temperatures in the world, making him forget for a moment, whilst enjoying the refreshing wind, that a tropical sun is shining above him, ready to strike him down if he incautiously exposes himself to its rays. On the esplanade the *élite* of Madras every evening assemble, and form parties to ride or drive to St. Thomas's Mount, or the beautiful spot where the artillery are quartered. The road which leads to it is really very picturesque and striking, and the residents appeared so truly to enjoy their exercise here, that I must say I embarked with regret, after passing a very delightful fortnight at Madras.

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THE BAY OF BENGAL.

While skirting along the shore, and watching the pagodas and palm trees which fringe the beach, I was much pleased with the trip; but within a few hours after the official pilot had come on board a storm arose, and I for the first time in my life saw a tempest on the sand-heads. The ocean here is very shallow, and the waves run mountains high. A more dangerous place, I believe, is not known; but so skilful are the pilots, a most meritorious branch of the Company's service, that vessels are seldom lost. Continually beating about this rough sea from their earliest youth, the pilots of the Bay of Bengal are about the most skilful and courageous seamen in the world. To one of these we certainly now owed our safety. In the midst of a gale of wind we passed the island of Saugor, where poor Munroe was destroyed by a tiger, and entered the Hoogley river, up which we proceeded till we arrived at Diamond Harbour, a wretched place, where barren lands and water filled with alligators alone meet the eye. Here, as the vessel cast anchor, we abandoned her, and proceeded in a pleasure boat, or budgerow, up to Calcutta, a distance of thirty miles.

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CALCUTTA.

The approach to Calcutta is one of the most beautiful which can be imagined. The fine river flowing between high banks covered with picturesque villas, whose gardens extend to the very water's edge; the oriental trees and shrubs, new to the European eye; the strange-looking boats passing up and down—all lend a charm to the scene which now strikes the traveller with admiration, and prepares him for the magnificent capital he is about to enter.

Calcutta has justly been styled a city of palaces, and as such it appears to the Englishman on his first arrival. As in almost every other Anglo-Indian town, the portion in which our countrymen reside is widely divided from that in which the natives live. The first resembles a well-built Italian town, though the wideness of the streets bespeaks a sacrifice to taste at the expense of comfort. The Indians in this respect are far wiser than ourselves; they construct theirs as narrow as possible, in order to create a perpetual shade, and shut out the sun as far as they can. Even in Spain this plan has been adopted; but our princely settlers at Bengal have preferred the magnificence of an ornamental to a comfortable metropolis. The houses are for the most part of stone. Those that are not are whitened, which sheds an unpleasant glare, and is dazzling to the eye.

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They are generally speaking three stories high, and their roofs ornamented by the frequent appearance of a bird called the adjutant, a gigantic stork which abounds in Calcutta, and is much encouraged as a scavenger, a fell destroyer of all reptiles. They never congregate, it is said, except in garrison towns, and live on the offal thrown out by the troops. Their swallow is enormous, their flight very low. Their chief delight is to perch upon the roofs of the houses in Calcutta, where they remain so immovable for hours together, that the recently arrived traveller not unfrequently mistakes them for carved ornaments.

The houses are almost all slightly detached: the ground floors are usually converted into cellars. Tank Square and Writer's Buildings are striking objects. The principal church is remarkably fine, and the whole wears an aspect of grandeur and riches not to be met with elsewhere. The creaking waggons called hackeries, the native doolies, the burdened water-carrier, and the rich baboo, or black gent, walking beneath a wide-spreading umbrella, borne by a miserable native; the covered gig of the young officer, and the smart palanquin of the old civilian, preceded by a bevy of servants bearing silver clubs, render the town extremely gay, but far less noisy than the different bazaars, or native quarters in which trade is carried on. Here the crowd is always dense, and the

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European may be seen jolting along amidst a crowd of Indians and Chinamen, the latter being the favourite shoemakers in Calcutta. The noise and din here are beyond description. Every native seems to be proclaiming the value of his goods in the highest tones of his voice, whilst even fair ladies may occasionally be seen haggling for some favourite article of dress.

The esplanade is, however, the favoured spot where all that is fashionable in Calcutta collects together in the evening. Here the Governor-General, surrounded by his splendid staff, or escorted by his smart body-guard, may be seen driving towards Chowringee. Here the dashing officer, the apathetic old civilian, and the proud beauty from Europe, may be seen promenading, riding, or driving up and down; and well, indeed, has the spot been selected—a more lovely one could not have been chosen. On the one side is the magnificent fort (Fort William); opposite to it, at a distance of about half a mile, stands the Government House, one of the most splendid edifices in the world, flanked on either side by public buildings and the residences of high official functionaries; while the Hoogley fills up this side, and the other is occupied by a suburb called Chowringee, which may fairly be styled the Quartier St. Germain of Calcutta. The *élite* here reside, and stamp this *locale* as the fashionable quarter — the "Belgravia" of Bengal. The Freemasons' Hall and the theatre, in which

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amateurs perform, are here situate, together with some few of the public offices. In a word, luxury seems here to reside in every shape—luxury rendered the more palpable by the juxtaposition into which the miseries of the wretched natives are brought; exhibiting as they do a race of people who live in miserable dens, which they only quit to fulfil the duties of beasts of burden, beneath a burning sun and a threatened castigation.

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THE MUSSULAH BOAT.

Just as our vessel was about to anchor two catamarans suddenly appeared on deck, to the great horror of those who had never seen such beings before, and the great delight of the old Madrassees, who expected to receive letters by them. The two men before us were stark naked, with the exception of a very small rag and a little cap, made of dried palm leaves, for the carriage of their despatches. They had paddled out at least six miles from shore, seated on a small log of wood, propelling themselves each with a single oar, with which they kept time to a sort of chant, which they sang as they struck their paddles in the waves, and made their way through the terrific surf, which extends about two miles out from the shore of Madras. No wonder that the first ship which ever saw these strange creatures took them for demons, and entered in their log-book the following quaint notice:—"At one o'clock P.M. came in sight of the principal town on the Coromandel coast. Saw two devils playing at single-stick on the surface of the water. God grant it foretell no evil!" No wonder they could scarcely believe that human beings should thus float out on such a frail support, and encounter the waves, which in this part of the globe run mountains high, and amid the deadly sharks, which here abound, without defence or assistance. Often and often are they washed off, and as often regain their piece of timber, with a hardihood which seems to

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paralyse the monsters of the deep; for seldom or never is a catamaran carried off by these ravenous animals, who, however, greedily devour the European who dares to encounter them.

The catamaran, pulling off his little leaf cap, delivered his letters, and, having informed us that our arrival had been signalled at the fort, and, consequently, that a couple of mussulah boats were already on their way to carry off our passengers, plunged again into the water, seemingly delighted to get rid of our rude stare, and return to his quasi-natural element. Our clothes for immediate wear were soon packed up, and before the boats touched the sides of the vessel we were all ready on the quarter-deck watching their approach.

These peculiarly constructed boats are the only ones that could live through such a sea. Formed of bark, they float on the very tip of each wave, and bend as it strikes her sides, which are at least eight feet high, with banks running across the top, on which some dozen or fourteen native rowers are perched. The European, together with his luggage, is stowed at the bottom of the vessel, with a strict caution to be very quiet. In this leviathan canoe we seated ourselves, and started for Madras.

When we reached the first line of surf no words can describe the terror we felt—thrown in an instant to a dizzy height, then suddenly plunged down with a rapidity which for an instant checked the breath, while we looked up, and saw the towering waves ready to burst over our heads, occasionally dotted with a catamaran; each boat being attended by several of these worthies, who in case of accident instantly pick up the passengers, and for which they always receive a

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silver medal. The noise of the angry surf, which seemed intent on our destruction, completely paralysed the majority of us. Not so, however, a young and beautiful girl, who was about to join her parents in India. She seemed to exult in the danger which surrounded us. She appeared to court the awe-inspiring scene, and smiled with joy as we shrank appalled at the raging foam. A young officer, to whom she was betrothed, seemed delighted with these fresh proofs of her courage, and assisted her to mount the bench of the rowers, much against the advice of the natives. He was about to spring up after her in order to hold her, when a sudden lurch of the boat threw him to the bottom of the vessel, and the object of his love into the boiling waves. A general scream burst from all. No assistance could be given—no help afforded. We were in the very midst of the most dangerous line. Young Osborne sprang up. He looked around; but no sign of the poor girl could be seen; nothing could be perceived but the hissing, raging sea. A second glance to guide him equally futile—an appealing look towards heaven, and Osborne leaped into the waves. The stoical Indians still pulled on: they did not waver in their stroke, but continued in their steady exertions; and they were right in so doing, for I afterwards learnt that a single pause, even for an instant, and all would have been lost.

To describe the grief of the poor mother of Louisa Marchmont would require an abler pen than mine; nor, had I the power would I wish to harrow up the feelings of my reader by a sketch of her dreadful agony, her torture, as she vainly attempted to clamber up to the bank, from which she was forcibly held down. At length we felt a shock as if of an

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earthquake; the Indians jumped out, and in two minutes more we stood safely on the strand, enjoying the delight of the mother as she clasped her almost senseless daughter to her breast, crying with agonising joy. A catamaran, already decorated with six silver medals, had caught her as she fell, and gained a seventh honour by bearing her safely to shore.

As Louisa recovered, and unlocked herself from her mother's embrace, she looked around, fondly expecting the congratulations of another loved being; but, alas! Osborne was not there. Again she gazed, and at length gained strength to ask for him. None answered. Again she repeated the question: the averted looks of all told her a tale of .

Another catamaran now landed, and approached the group. Unaware of the situation of the parties, he slowly pronounced in excellent English, "The young man has become the prey of the sharks."

One harrowing shriek, followed by a shudder from all, closed this dreadful scene. Poor Louisa is now a religious, good, but melancholy woman.

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MY FIRST MORNING IN CALCUTTA

I AWOKE about seven o'clock on the morning after my arrival, and, for an instant, scarcely recollected where I was. I was lying on a hard bed, inclosed in a tightly-drawn yellow gauze veil. Daylight was forcing its rays through the closed Venetian blinds. A feverish, unrefreshed sensation shed a disagreeable lassitude through my frame; I recalled my present situation, and soon after happened to cough. In an instant a dusky form stood beside me. The watchful *khitmutgar* had been listening for hours to catch a single loud-drawn breath to announce my waking. He had remained in silence, salaaming his respects to me. "What hour is it?" demanded I. The poor fellow seemed terror-struck at finding I could not speak Hindostanee. He placed his two hands together as we do in an attitude of prayer, apparently beseeching me not to punish him for not being able to understand me. In another instant a sudden thought seemed to strike him. He glided noiselessly away.

As I was in no great haste to rise I did not seek to detain him; but, throwing my head upon my pillow (if such a hard thing could be dignified with such an appellation), began to ruminate on my situation.

I had come out to India by the desire of one of the bes of parents, who held a high official post in the country, and whose conduct during a long series of years had rendered him an object of respect and esteem to all his fellow

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countrymen—of almost adoration to the natives. On my landing the night before I had learned, to my sincere grief, that my father had expired some days previously to my arrival. My godfather, at whose splendid mansion I should have taken up my abode, was gone to Penang (the Prince of Wales Island) for the benefit of his health, and others who ought to have received me were absent from the metropolis. I had, therefore, cheerfully and gratefully accepted the invitation of Charles Jarvis, an old bachelor, who asked me to take up my quafters at his small house in Durrumtullah till I was enabled to form an establishment of my own. Here, then, I now lay, building plans for my future guidance.

Presently the servant returned, accompanied by another, who professed to speak English.

"Massa, make ready for make shabee."

I scarcely understood what he meant; but, as I considered it the safest way, I nodded. In the next moment his companion raised the musquito curtain, and, before I was aware of his intention, he had lathered my chin all over; then, seizing me by the nose with a finger and thumb of icy coldness, began to shave me. This operation he performed, seemingly, in the most expert manner as I lay on my back. I say *seemingly*, because the real truth was that I could be no judge, having as yet no beard requiring the exercise of his skill. The man, however, went mechanically through the job, wiping the suds on his naked arm, and looking as grave as if he was mowing down the bristling stubble of a hairy veteran. His operation completed, he salaamed and withdrew. Another servant now entered, bearing my linen, &c. I could scarcely believe that his black paws would not sully the bright white-

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ness of the objects he carried. I afterwards, however, became thoroughly convinced that no human being on earth is so scrupulously clean as the dingy Indian. This fancy was a mere passing idea; but, as I am determined to set down each thought that shot across my brain during my first morning in Bengal, I have accordingly noted it.

The new comer unclosed the curtains at my bed's foot, and, without saying a word, put on my stockings; then, coming to the side of the bed, he held open a pair of silk *panjamahs* (loose drawers made of the finest material, extremely large, and drawn round the waist with a silken cord and tassel), for me to jump into. This I did, and approached the dressing-table with an intent to finish my toilet; but all this trouble, all this exertion was spared me. Officious servants surrounded me, and not only handed me, but actually put on me, every part of my habiliments, seemingly rather annoyed that I even took the trouble of washing my own hands, which, however, they dried for me.

"Well," thought I, "this is the most lazy proceeding I ever yet met with. No wonder old Indians on their return to Europe fancy themselves sadly neglected by their domestics. I shall, however, shut my door to-morrow morning, and insist on dressing myself." With this noble resolution I strutted into the breakfast parlour.

Though the table was laid, and several servants stood round the room, my friend was absent. I learnt that he had gone to take his regular ride, but would return before eight o'clock to breakfast.

"At what hour does your master usually ride?"

"Him getty up at four, massa," was the reply. I con-

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fess I could not help thinking him an unconscionably early riser.

At the appointed time Jarvis walked in; and, after shaking me by the hand and welcoming me to Bengal, we sat down to our morning meal, which consisted of chocolate and tea, with rice, *ghee* (a mixture of rancid butter and curry-powder), some Bombay ducks (dried fish so called), sable *mutchy* (something like our salmon), and some prawns. The latter, however, I could not be induced to taste, since I had often heard that the finest and best prawns in India are occasionally extracted from the dead body of a floating black man. The breakfast over, our hookahs were brought, and a bottle of Hodgson's pale ale placed before us; and we sat at least half an hour, silently puffing away. The two *hookahburdars*, and the unfortunate man who sat squatted on the ground swinging to and fro the *punkah* (an enormous machine, something like the leaf of a screen, affixed to the ceiling of every sitting-room in India, the air of which is the only breeze that fans the faces of the residents), pursued their occupations with patient monotony. The palanquin-bearers busied themselves in putting up *cuscus tatties* (thick blinds made of a peculiar kind of grass, which they soon after wetted, in order to cool the air as it passed through them) in the most noiseless manner. The other servants quietly removing the breakfast things, their naked feet causing no sound to be heard, seemed so strangely still that I could almost have believed we were waited on by a party of spectres.

"And now, my dear boy," said Jarvis, at length breaking silence, "you must begin to think about setting up your establishment. As you say you wish to proceed instantly up

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the country, and take your servants with you, the sooner you make the necessary arrangements the better."

"Well, sir, I will be entirely guided by you in this affair; but, as you know my means are unexpectedly cut down, I hope you will start me on a fair but economical scale."

"*Bon*," quoth Charley, who was rather fond of interlarding his conversation with French terms, "*bon*. Now let me see; the first thing I had better do is to acquaint you with the price of provisions, the wages of servants, and other matters, and leave it to your discretion to keep down your expenses."

"Agreed."

"Cloth hats and other objects of dress are now high; buy, therefore, nothing of this kind. In six months the rise in these articles will be known in Europe; in six more the market will be so glutted with them you will buy them for less than half their cost price. English horses, too, are dear. You will get nothing fit to ride under two hundred pounds; and, after all, they are good for nothing but racing in this country."

"I should prefer an Arab."

"If you get a good one you will indeed find it a treasure; but good Arabs are very high-priced and difficult to find. The second class cost from sixty to eighty pounds; and, though showy, are, generally speaking, vicious, and stumble every hundred yards. No, my boy, buy a couple of good country nags, and a *tatoo* pony as a hack. They may be less beautiful, but certainly more useful, more enduring than either an Arab or an English horse in India. There is a large sale this morning."

"I will attend it."

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"The principal beverages in Hindostan are brandy, which we drink mixed with water, and style *brandy pawny*, *loll shrob* (claret), and Hodgson's pale ale. The first is about the same price as in England, the second less than half; the last frequently costs three rupees a bottle, and is therefore looked upon as a most genteel drink—one in which ladies and gentlemen may pledge each other's good health at table. A sheep costs a rupee (about two shillings). A dozen of fowls may be had for the same money. Game may be bought for almost nothing. Bread and all other objects of consumption are equally low. The wages of servants, who feed themselves and sleep upon the floor, about eight rupees a month; your lower domestics from four to six. *Gram* (a grain on which they feed horses in India) is extremely reasonable, and *bungalows* up the country let at moderate rents."

I was delighted. Everything so apparently cheap, I began to pour out my conviction that I should be able to live for next to nothing.

"Stay, stay, not so fast, my young friend; the quality may be cheap, but the quantity required will perhaps rather astonish you. In the first place you *must* keep horses. You *must* live like others, and drink expensive beverages. We have no small beer, no cheap liquors here to quench your thirst. Again, it is true a sheep costs less than half a crown, but then it will not keep twelve hours; so every small joint you eat will be the same as a whole animal. Your linen dresses may be cheaper than your cloth clothes in England, but you must change them at least three times a day; and so great is the quantity of *chunam* (a sort of starch) put into them, that

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they will rot and tear in the course of a few weeks. You must furnish your own residence; while, as to servants, we will settle that at once. A *khansumah*, or head servant, to attend to your table at eight rupees a month."

"Well, sir," cried I, interrupting him, "at all events, that is cheap."

"Stay. A *sirdar*, or principal servant, to look after your clothes."

"What! won't the *khansumah* do?"

"By no means. Each man has his particular duty, and will not interfere with any other matter; it is against his caste."

"What a bore! But pray go on."

"A *khitmutgar* to wait behind your chair; a *hookahburdar* to take care of your *hookah*."

"But, my dear sir, couldn't ——"

"Hush, not at all. I know what you were going to say; but, as I before assured you, all these persons are indispensable. You must have eight bearers to carry you in your palanquin; a *peon* to convey your notes and messages; a *dhobee* (washerman), a *durzee* (a tailor), and ——"

"Stop, stop, Mr. Jarvis. Surely if I like I can get my things made at a shop."

"There are no tailors' shops up the country. I am only naming the servants you will find absolutely necessary."

I groaned audibly. He went on.

"Then you will require a *bheestee* (a water-carrier) to bring your water; a *bobachee* (cook) to dress your dinner; three *syces* (grooms) to take care of your three horses, and follow you when riding; and a *grass-cutter* (a mower) to supply them

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with hay. This is the smallest establishment you can possibly keep. Besides, I had nearly forgotten that you must positively have a good *abdar* to cool your water for drinking, and a *moonshee* (an interpreter) as long as you are ignorant of the language."

"Gracious Providence! you cannot surely mean to say that it is necessary to hire two dozen persons to wait upon a single individual?"

"Indeed I do."

"Then I 'll be shot if I sha'n't be ruined," grunted I, as I jumped into my friend's palanquin, and by his advice started off for *Tulloh's Outcry* (auction), where several nags were that morning to be sold, and where he told me I should meet all the gay loungers in Calcutta. As we approached the gate of the courtyard in which my friend's house stood one of the bearers came up to me, and jabbered something; but, as I could not understand a word he said, I merely repeated the word *jeldi* (make haste), which Jarvis had taught me, and proceeded. The instant the portals were thrown open we found ourselves in the midst of a dense crowd. I naturally looked out to ascertain the cause of it. Imagine my horror when I beheld a human being hanging over the archway of Jarvis's gates. It is true, strictly true, they had executed the man on the spot where the murder had been committed, and for which he had been convicted. The spot happened to be at the door of my entertainer. I shrank back, I confess, in horror and disgust.

For an instant I stopped at the house of Major P——, to whom I had a letter of introduction, and was immediately shown in. P—— was, for the time being, the director of the

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private theatricals, the most popular and delightful amusement in Calcutta. A black man, to whom a part had been allotted in one of the performances, was with him. He was about to *jawab* him (send him away), when I begged he might stay. The following dialogue actually took place in my presence.

"Tell me, why do you object to play this part? It is the only one you can perform, on account of your colour; it is the part of a black man."

"Yes, massa, me know; all berry good; but me no understandee—not English, massa."

"You mistake me; it is English, but as a foreigner would speak it."

"Can't you give me, massa, what I makee out? Me no learny this."

"My dear fellow, you must. It is your part; it is broken English, written expressly for a black character."

"Yes, yes, massa, berry good; but if same thing to massa, give me de good English, I breaky mysel'."

P—— burst out laughing. I heartily shared his mirth, and left him, after a quarter of an hour's visit, still vainly endeavouring to convince the Indian that the author's broken English was better than his own.

I dropped in for five minutes at the magnificent establishment of Messrs. —— and Co., the leviathan bankers, the Rothschilds of the East. (They have since failed, but, at the time I speak of, their riches were supposed to be incalculable.) Never did I see such magnificence. The object, however, which struck me with the greatest admiration of all was the mouth-piece to the hookah belonging to the lady of the house.

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It was entirely composed of precious stones, and had been valued at £12,000. I believe it had been the gift of some native prince, whom ——, a man universally beloved, had been enabled to serve. On going out I met a sweet child in arms, carried by a native *ayah* (a nurse). Struck with its beauty, I asked to whom it belonged. "—— and Co., *sahib*," replied the woman. "Thank you," said I, as I again jumped into my palanquin, smiling at the mistake of the poor woman.

Arrived at the *outcry*, all was gaiety. Here lounged the artillery officers from Dum Dum, and the staff-officer from the Government House. The cadet came here to throw away his ready money, and the old civilian his superfluous savings. Not that any of these white-jacketed gentlemen (for I must remark that every one was thus dressed, the military only distinguished by their sashes) wanted any particular object announced for sale, but here dropped in, in case a particularly good house, a super-excellent batch of *lall shrob*, a few cases of champagne, or a lot of English hams were by chance put up. This was their almost daily lounge. No wonder, then, that the post of auctioneer in Calcutta is reckoned so good that the gentleman puffing away before me had given up a troop of dragoons and a staff appointment to become a knight of the hammer, a post which would secure him at least thirty thousand pounds in less than five years. Like the other glories of India, the great profits of these gentlemen have passed away. During the sale I saw an old man of at least seventy years of age, with one foot in the grave, buy a cellar of wine sufficient for thirty years' consumption. I beheld a raw boy, unaware of his folly,

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purchase eighteen bad horses, merely because they went cheap. A civilian bought twelve dozen English hats, which, when he came to look over, he found filled with ants; while, as to myself, I bought a curiously carved ivory box. I seized the treasure, opened a small drawer, and beheld a scorpion ready to rush out. I dropped the desk, which instantly broke into a thousand pieces. I suddenly became an object of commiseration to some, of ridicule to others. I liked neither the one nor the other, so I called my bearers, and in high dudgeon jolted back to Durrumtullah.

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A NIGHT IN THE CALCUTTA HOTEL.

JAMES M'CARTHY arrived in the metropolis of Bengal almost direct from Cork. With all the implicit credulity of his country, he had believed every story which had been palmed upon him during the voyage, and, though he was somewhat staggered by the bold assertion of one of his brother cadets, that the race of Anthropophagi (described by Shakspeare as carrying their heads under their arms) actually existed in India, yet, as he had been taught devoutly to rely on the fact that St. Patrick floated over from Holyhead (so called, says the tradition, from this miracle) to Park Gate, seated on his own cranium, why, after all, the thing might not be impossible.

As to the race of the original serpent which tempted Eve still existing in many parts of the East, there was evidently nothing unlikely in that; while rivers of gum springing from forest trees, colonies of monkeys who sang songs, played at cricket, and got drunk upon cocoa-nut milk, were objects he daily expected to meet with; being not a jot more improbable than one of his own native legends, or even those sporting anecdotes which he not only related as facts, but was ready to fight any man who dared to doubt them.

He had, on his father's domain in Galway, what he called a "t'orough-bred mear, that had jumped a wall sivin feet high, coped and dashed, and sprang a dyke t'irty-t'ree feet

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wide, during a Rockrochan * steeple-chase." He pulled the little doctor's nose because he doubted that the M'Carthys had an attendant *banshee* attached to their family, and called out the skipper because he insisted on burning three lights in the cuddy.

Of the terror-inspiring objects of human nature in general Mac felt no dread; but the threat of a banshee, the mischief of a fairy, or the idea of his Satanic Majesty clothed in an earthly form, could at any time nearly throw him into fits. Brave, open-hearted, and generous, he was passionate, superstitious, and credulous. He came, he believed, to a land of horrors, solely with the idea of picking fruit from the pagoda tree. He had about as much idea of Asia as an Indian of my acquaintance had of Europe, who once asked me if I knew "Missy East India Company," adding gravely, "Missy Company must be very old lady now!"

Mais revenons à nos moutons. M'Carthy, having no friends in Calcutta, on landing took up his abode at the hotel. There are now several hotels, but at the time I write of there was but that one, which was almost deserted, so great was the hospitality formerly displayed by the British residents in India. One or two other passengers went to the same house, preparatory to delivering their letters of introduction. By and by the evening looked so fine that he proposed to two ladies, who were of the party, to take a stroll through the town.

"Put on your bonnets, girls, and sure we 'll be after

* I have here spelt the name of this renowned steeple-chase exactly as it should be pronounced, or rather, I should say, as I have heard it pronounced by Galway and Roscommon men.

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looking about us. Faith, and it 's a mighty fine place this Calcutta — it 's almost as grand as Cork, only, you see, they 've nothing like Cove in these parts."

The young ladies consented, and the trio were about to sally forth, when, lo ! the master of the house stopped them at the door, and with a look of horror assured them that, if they persisted in going out during the heat of the day, they would probably be struck down by a *coup de soleil.*

" Thin the divil an ever sich a counthry I ever heard of, bad scram to it ! " ejaculated Mac as he turned back.

As he was going upstairs it was his fate to meet a snake-charmer, carrying several of these reptiles with him.

" Ye blackguard of the world ! " shouted the enraged Irishman, " is it to kill and murder us entirely you come here with yere bastes of the divil ? By the piper that played before Moses, if you don't make yourself scarce it 's my mother's son that 'll bate your four bones to powther."

Now this was an idle threat — perhaps the only one M'Carthy ever offered; for he would just as soon have thrown himself into a well as have approached the juggler, who was not a little surprised to find the exhibition of his powers thus strenuously rejected. Like a true Indian he only salaamed, and, with the servile humility of his race, he mildly and gently retired. The sight of the snakes had made poor Mac nervous.

After a late dinner one or two old Indians present called for their hookahs. Their *hookahburdars* brought them up unperceived by James M'Carthy, who happened to be deeply engaged in conversation; and, having placed the bottoms or

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water-cups close to Mac's chair, gave the snake (the tube of a hookah is so called) into their masters' hands.

At the first whiff M'Carthy started up. The hubble-bubble noise of the smoke passing through the water seemed to his ears like the sound of a rattlesnake; and, as they came directly from the back of his chair, the unfortunate Irishman sprang bolt upright, and looked round with horror. Presently he perceived the tube twisted round the arm of one of the old residents.

"Oh, milley murthers!" cried he, pointing to the apparently dreadful object, "what is that?"

"This?" returned the other coolly; "this is my snake."

"Tunder and 'ouns!" screamed the Patlander, making a rush for the door, "what do you mane by bringing the baste here, you ould blackguard?"

It was now the turn of the other to feel astonished. An explanation, however, at length took place; and, though M'Carthy wanted sadly to fight the civilian for having made him expose himself, yet at length they became friends, and poor Mac, in the true spirit of Hibernian friendship, got gloriously drunk with him, and in this state was led to his bed.

It was past midnight. It might have been one or two o'clock in the morning when our friend was awoke by a most extraordinary noise in one corner of his vast bedchamber. The fumes of his late orgies still rose through his brain, and to a certain degree confused his senses; but, in spite of this, M'Carthy felt assured that strange and unearthly noises proceeded ever and anon from the aforesaid corner of the room. He attempted to battle the idea, and even endeavoured to go

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to sleep; but, alas! the mysterious noises again arose, and, in spite of semi-intoxication, in spite of his desire to look upon the sounds as unreal, poor James was recalled by them to perfect recollection. He raised his head slightly from his pillow, and distinctly heard the same noises repeated. He started bolt upright. It was no delusion, it was no mistake, for alarm had perfectly sobered him. The same sounds met his ear. James M'Carthy defied all the world. He, however, excluded his Satanic Majesty from the list of those whom he thus braved. Before any human power, however overwhelming, he would have scorned to fly. It was, he justly considered, no dishonour to retreat from an attack of Beelzebub, so he jumped out of bed and made for the door.

The dreadful sounds still continued. Mac trembled like an aspen-leaf. The demon was evidently approaching his victim. James could bear no more. For one instant he uncovered himself, and suddenly hurled the pillow towards the spot whence the noise apparently proceeded.

An instant only elapsed. A fluttering of wings was heard; the imp (or whatever it might be) suddenly seemed to change its form, or rather, throwing off its disguise, seemed once more to re-assume its devilish attributes, and spreading its wings actually flew across the bed of poor M'Carthy, flapping them in the face of the unfortunate Irishman.

Words would be too weak to express the feelings of poor James. He was actually for an instant paralysed; but, suddenly recovering his senses, he sprang out, and, preferring death itself, he raised the window, which for the moment he forgot was two stories high, and boldly jumped out!

"Tunder and 'ouns! what is the maning of this same?"

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demanded Mac as he looked round, and saw every one laughing at him. "Sure I t'ought I was on the second floor! Ah! thin till me, has the house sunk in the night?"

"Not a bit," replied his friend; "but, if you had happened to have looked out of window before you went to bed, you would have perceived that there is a flat roof to the lower apartments, which forms a terrace to the second; so why or wherefore you chose to hang out of your window in your present improper condition, and wake all the house by your cries, in preference to dressing yourself and coming down the few steps like a steady man, I can't conceive. Poor Miss H—— is in fits. Mrs. L—— is so ill that she has sent for the doctor; and it is feared she will meet with an accident (being in a delicate state) before he arrives. Old Chambers has got a fit of the gout from the sudden alarm, and several persons have run off to call the guard; and all this because you chose to get tipsy, swing yourself out of the window, and then roar like a bull, and disturb the whole neighbourhood."

"Arrah, thin, hush, my fine fellow, jist for a bit of a minute, and I 'll till ye all about it. Sure the divil 's there above."

"The what!"

"Thin may O'Donaghue and his fairies punish me, but it 's thrue. You 're a 'cute man; sure I 'll make ye sinsible entirely;" and he led his friend away, and told him all about the horrors he had heard and felt.

Having put on the dressing-gown of his friend (for he feared to venture alone into his own chamber), he summoned up the landlord and one or two others, to whom he again

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related the way in which his Satanic Majesty had visited him during the night, first in the shape of a snake, and then in the form of an eagle. His hearers trembled and looked at each other; but, as it was now daylight, they could not well refuse to accompany M'Carthy to his room, which they accordingly entered. No vestige, however, of the devilish visitor remained. One or two fancied they detected the smell of sulphur, but others declared this was mere fancy. Every corner was searched—nothing was visible. At length somebody proposed to look under the bed. No sooner did that person approach than a hissing noise proceeded from the spot. The whole group started back in dismay. Their cry of terror brought more persons to their assistance, and amongst others a native armed with a long bamboo. He was requested to poke it under the bed, in order to disturb the devil from his snug hiding-place. He did so. The hissing increased. The women actually shrieked with terror, and the men huddled themselves close together. A noise of wings was heard. M'Carthy, who was pale with fright, looked appealingly towards the company and crossed himself. The native gave a still more violent thrust, when, lo! out flew, not Beelzebub, but A GOOSE!—a poor harmless goose, that by accident had got into the bedroom of the now enraged Irishman.

With the discovery of the cause of Mac's alarm a general laugh arose at the unhappy man's mistake, and those who had fully shared his terrors a few moments before were now the most forward to ridicule him.

M'Carthy vainly endeavoured to hush the matter up. He called out two of his best friends for talking of a goose in his

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presence; insulted a young lady to whom he was engaged, because she laughed when she heard the story; threatened and fumed about it for at least two years, at the end of which time, finding it impossible to fight the whole world, our hero suddenly turned round, joined in the joke, and ever afterwards consented to be called "Goose M'Carthy!"

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PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES.

When first I arrived in India I heard of nothing but snakes and venomous reptiles. I was told not to have a drop of milk in the room in which I slept, for fear of attracting a cobra capella or a cobra manilla. My pockets were stuffed with garlic to keep them off, as they have a peculiar dislike to this herb. A bottle of *eau de luce* was always about my person, as it is well known that if the part bitten be instantly cut out or burnt, and rubbed with this celebrated medicament, and a draught of the same taken, diluted with water, inwardly, life may be saved, even though the manilla, the worst of all the serpent tribe, may have inflicted the wound. In the second class of horrors I found scorpions and centipedes, not quite as fatal, but almost as disagreeable in their attacks. From the bite of the flying fox (a large species of bat), down to that of the musquito, everything seemed venomous, insuring a tiresome, and often dangerous illness. Even the common little lizard, dropping a liquid when passing over one's body, which causes a smart pain, and finally raises a blister, and the large ant, which abounds in the East, are objects to be dreaded. In such a climate, if the blood is not in a good state, a long confinement to the house generally attends the very slightest of these accidents. No wonder, then, that a feeling of dread continually haunted me respecting these reptiles—a feeling which embittered many of my otherwise happy hours.

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Like every one else who indulges in antipathies or fears, the objects of my dread hourly presented themselves before me, not only in imagination, but *in propria persona*. If a snake was found in the cantonment I was sure to be an accidental spectator on the occasion. If a serpent-charmer arrived I was certain to be the person to whom he first applied for employment. My dogs were bitten, my monkey killed by the sting of a scorpion. I lived a life of continual terror. I once dared to go out shooting. That once would have been enough for most men: never can I forget the horrors of it. I ventured amongst some rose-bushes, which abound near Ghazepoor, where I was quartered, and amongst which good sport was said to be found. I ventured, I say, to penetrate this aromatic jungle, when, lo! I saw a cobra manilla at a short distance. I did not hesitate, but, raising my gun, I fired directly at the monster. Whether I hit her or not I have never ascertained; whether I had disturbed the reptile when coiling round her eggs I knew not; but no sooner did the shot touch her than, suddenly unwinding her close folds, the cobra manilla darted towards me. I turned and fled. The snake pursued me. I summoned up my best speed, but all in vain. I glanced round—the serpent was close to me. I hallooed loudly for my syce, who was holding my horse some quarter of a mile off. I still further increased my speed. The snake actually began to spring, darting as it were, throwing itself in quick successive bounds after me. I threw down my gun, and speeded on for my very life. A ditch was before me. I was so nervous, I missed my distance, and was actually entangled in it, striving to climb the opposite bank. The cobra was on the very brink

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following me, when my syce came running up. He assisted me in mounting my horse. Nearly fainting, I started home to my bungalow, so completely overcome as to be unable to tell my servant for several hours afterwards what had occurred.

Other accidents, somewhat similar to the above, which occurred to my friends, served to strengthen my fears, more particularly the fact of our assistant surgeon (who lived only next door) having actually found a cobra manilla in his bed, a circumstance by no means unparalleled during the rains.

To guard against such accidents was my constant study. My room was strewed with garlic; a night-light continually burned in my bedroom; a bottle of *eau de luce* always stood within reach; and yet, with all these precautionary measures, I never could sleep soundly, so great was my dread of a midnight attack from some dreadful reptile.

My courage was soon to be put to the test.

One evening I returned more than ordinarily fatigued to my bungalow, and hastened to bed. I was soon asleep, and, as usual, dreaming away of Europe and her charms. Suddenly I was awakened by a cold object resting on my arm. Involuntarily I raised my other arm towards it. It glided rapidly off, not, however, till it had inflicted its dreaded bite; for I plainly felt the pain, which, though not acute, was stinging, resembling the puncture of a hot instrument or sudden scald. The fact, however, was obvious. I had been bitten, and was probably a dead man. I sprang from my bed, rushed towards my dressing-table, and, with a courage which nothing but danger could have inspired, seized one of my razors, and

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without hesitation cut out the bitten part. I actually scooped out a piece nearly as large as a nut. Then, with my arm bleeding profusely, I rushed towards the lamp, and, catching it up, burnt the wounded part for several seconds.

By this time several of my servants had arrived, alarmed by my cries. One hastened off for our assistant surgeon, who, as I before said, lived only next door, while the others began to question me as to the cause of my alarm.

In broken sentences I explained to them my situation. They were horrified. Whilst one poured *eau de luce* into the dreadful self-inflicted gash the others prepared a potion of the same medicine diluted in water, which I hastily swallowed.

By this time I was more calm, and when Dr. Sisson arrived I was collected enough to view my situation with becoming philosophy.

Whilst he was dressing my arm and binding it up I took advantage of the silence, the awe of the moment, to signify to him my last wishes in case of my death. I stated the manner in which I desired to be buried, the style of letters I wished written to my relations, the way in which I wished my little remaining property to be disposed of.

The doctor was almost tempted to shed tears. The surrounding khitmutgars stood in the mute agony of woe. Sisson, however, hoped I had cut deep enough, and he assured me he thought the virus had not had time to enter the system. He therefore bid me hope for the best, and all yet might go well.

"Let us, at least," said he, in conclusion, "have the consolation of destroying the reptile that has thus endangered

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your life. Here, my men, bring each a soft cane, and let us attack the monster together."

The men ran out, and came back each armed with a pliant bamboo, a single stroke of which will instantly kill the most dreaded snake in India.

"And now surround the bed; the reptile cannot have got away. Gently, gently; keep your eyes steadily fixed. He must be under the pillow. Directly I raise it be ready to strike. Ha! there he is!"

The servants at once struck at the object pointed out, and succeeded in killing it. They held it up, when, lo! it proved to be a poor little lizard, a harmless animal, which, beyond the blistering drop he had let fall on my arm, bears no venom.

The doctor burst out into a roar of laughter. The black rascals joined in it.

The next week I was forced to get two months' leave, for, wherever I appeared with my arm in a sling, my "dying words" were quoted to me. In a word, I was almost teased to death merely because, when I fancied I had been bitten by a snake, I had chosen to take "precautionary measures."

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TABLE TALK.

"Men will often, until render'd sager,
Back their own opinion by a wager."

EVERY one bets in India: betting is the life and soul of society. Ladies smoke rose-water hookahs, and bet gold mohurs; gentlemen puff strong chillums, and stake lacs of rupees. Everything that comes on the table, everything that passes the window, becomes the subject of a wager. The number of almonds served up on a dessert plate, or the probable sex of the next passer-by, may cause the transfer of thousands of rupees; for, in a country where none wear purses, money becomes a mere nominal commodity, only to be spoken of, rarely to be seen. The consequence naturally results that, it being quite as easy to talk of thousands as hundreds, and far more imposing to do so, lacs of rupees are sported, till the unfortunate sporter, if not exceedingly knowing, *lacks* everything; the rich idler becomes the tool of the knowing sharper, who makes gambling his profession, and as such studies it during those hours devoted by the other to amassing riches to pay his debts.

Charles Macauley (this was not *bonâ fide* his name, but I will call him so) was one of the former—that is to say, a good fellow, who would bet on certainties, drug your wine, or play with you for what you liked whenever he was certain of having the best of it.

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James Gordon had long been a flat. While up the country he had lost large sums of money to Colonel Macauley, but, finding it more convenient, had come down to Calcutta to fill a lucrative post, had been two years in the capital of Bengal, and was not quite so raw as he once had been. Charles was unaware of this little fact, or perhaps he would not have followed him down as he did with the kind intent of fleecing him. However, these surmises have nothing to do with this sketch.

Colonel Charles Macauley had not arrived two hours in Tank Square ere he heard that his old friend Gordon was making money fast, that he was to give a very grand dinner party the next day, and that the said dinner was to be served on some splendid new dining-tables imported from Europe by the luxurious civilian. This information seemed strangely to interest Charley. At eleven o'clock next morning the gallant colonel jumped into his palanquin, and away he jogged to Chowringee to see his old friend.

"*Sahib in ghurmi hi?*" The question replied to in the affirmative, Charley ascended the stairs amid the low salaams of the linen-wrapped khitmutgars who lolled about the piazzas and passages. At last the great hall or banqueting-room was gained, and a very fine room it was.

"Gordon Sahib make shabe—come directly," said the confidential sirdar of the great man.

"*Bohut achar*," responded the visitor.

"Walky in here?"

"Rather not. I'll wait here till your master has finished his toilet: you may go;" and the colonel began to hum an air with a degree of carelessness peculiar to well-bred

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people, very different from the vulgarity of Mrs. Trollope's Americans. The black servant vanished; so did Charley's indifference as he quitted the room, for in the middle of the hall stood the identical tables that had just arrived from England. The colonel was a man who soon made up his mind to anything; he gave one glance around to insure that he was unobserved, and in another instant had pulled out a yard measure, and ascertained the exact height of the said tables, which he as instantly set down in his pocket-book; then, lolling out of the windows, began to watch the hackeries, tom-johns, palanquins, and other detestable vehicles which rapidly flitted through Chowringee.

The most knowing men are sometimes mistaken in their calculations; for once even Macauley was deceived. He had thought himself unobserved, but he was in error; for, as the sirdar had truly said, his master was shaving in the next room; his back was towards the door, his eyes on a little round looking-glass, which, unfortunately for Charley, reflected it. Now it so happened that the said door was slightly ajar when the measuring took place, so, without turning round or widening the aperture further, the owner of the tables saw the whole operation, and made up his mind to turn the tables on his friend; but to do this it required gumption, as we shall see by the sequel.

"How are you, my dear fellow? I am delighted to see you!" cried the civilian as he grasped the hand that had just been measuring. "Where have you been these thousand years?"

"Up the country—could not get away—the instant I could came down to see you. We 've had sharp work: three general

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actions and a sharp campaign. Our regiment alone lost a havildar and three sepoys, besides poor Jackson, who, you may remember, played whist so well. He got an ugly wound in the hand in the taking of a mud fort, where we had a drummer wounded—would drink brandy pawny, and died of mortification. I lost ten thousand rupees on him: I bet he would live three days; lost by two hours—devilish hard, wasn't it?—besides a thousand I should have won from him if he had survived till next day. He backed it not to rain, and it poured in torrents all the time we were burying him."

"Poor fellow! He is a great loss!"

"Indeed he is. We cannot make up a rubber now; so I got leave, and ran down to see you."

"When did you arrive?"

"Only last night; put up at Taylor's—deuced good fellow. He won a lac of rupees by making six hundred dots in a minute."

"You 'll dine with me to-day? Seven o'clock; got some famous loll shrob."

"I am engaged to Taylor's; but never mind that. I 'll get off, and come to you. I 've some business in the fort; so, till seven, good-by;" and away trotted the sporting colonel.

James Gordon ordered his servant to say he was out. He then busied himself about various affairs—amongst others, one which he thought important; but more of that anon.

At seven o'clock the dinner was served up, and a more excellent one never was given in Calcutta; but, as every pleasure must come to an end, so this excellent dinner at last was finished. The dessert was served up, and the hookahs began to emit their guttural notes.

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Many were the subjects broached and got rid of—many the boasts which enlivened this fashionable feast.

At length, by the most skilful manœuvring, and with infinite tact, Macauley brought the beauty of the new tables on the tapis. Every one admired them, and felt grateful to them for having so lately supported the rich dinner of their host.

"They are of the finest mahogany I ever saw," said Major Briscoe.

"They are perfect. I never saw any so well proportioned in my life. I must have some made like them," said a dinner-giving old civilian with half a liver.

"They are rather too high," chimed in Charles Macauley, with affected indifference; "just a *leetle* too high: don't you think so, Gordon?"

"On the contrary," replied the host, "if anything, I consider them a shade too low."

"You are mistaken, my dear fellow; I have an excellent eye, and I am sure I am right. No table should exceed two feet six, and these are at least one inch higher."

"You are in error; they are not more than two feet and a half."

"Don't bet, James, don't bet, for I am sure of the fact. I tell you I cannot be deceived—my eye is always correct."

"Not bet! If it were not that the tables are my own, and, consequently, I should bet on a certainty, I 'd lay you a lac of rupees they are not more than thirty inches in height."

"Oh! if you are willing I 'll make the bet; but remember, gentlemen, I tell you beforehand I am *certain* of the fact. I

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say these tables are at least thirty-one inches from the ground."

"Done for a lac of rupees!" cried Gordon.

"Done!" re-echoed Charley.

Their betting-books were brought out, and the wager duly registered. A servant was ordered to bring in a yard measure, when Macauley turned round with an air of triumph:—

"You may save yourselves the trouble of measuring—ha! ha!" and he chuckled with delight. "I warned you fairly I bet on a certainty, so you can't be off, James."

"I stand to my bet," said Gordon.

"Well, then, pay me my money. I measured the tables this morning while you were shaving, and here is a memorandum of their height—thirty-one inches exactly!" and the colonel burst into a roaring fit of laughter as he produced his pocket-book.

"I know you did," said James; "I saw you do so in my looking-glass." The colonel started. "So as soon as you had gone away, knowing well your intentions, I had an inch sawn off every leg; so for once, my knowing friend, *the tables are turned!*"

Charles Macauley left Calcutta next day £10,000 poorer than the day he had arrived; and, what is still worse, the very youngest ensigns quiz him about the story to this day.

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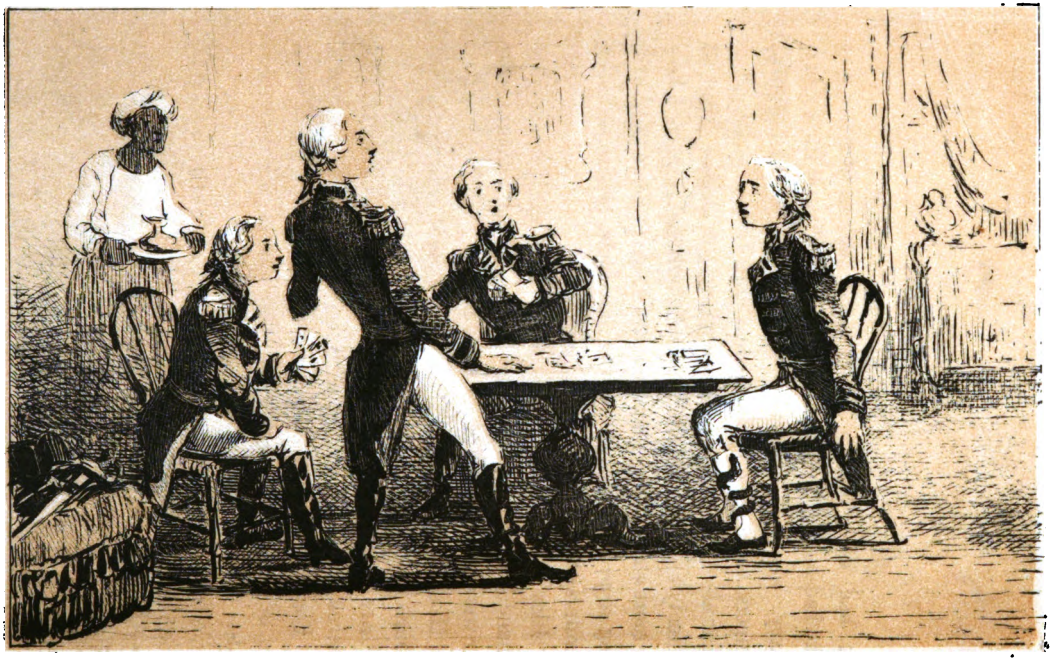

"FIFTH" AT WHIST.

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A FIFTH AT WHIST.

We had been playing all the evening at whist. Our stake had been gold mohur points, and twenty on the rubber. Maxey, who was always lucky, had won five consecutive bumpers, which lent a self-satisfied smile to his countenance, and made us, the losers, look anything but pleased, when he suddenly changed countenance and hesitated to play. This the more surprised us since he was one who seldom pondered, being so perfectly master of the game that he deemed long consideration superfluous.

"Play away, Maxey; what are you about?" impatiently demanded Churchill, one of the most impetuous youths that ever wore the uniform of the body-guard.

"Hush!" responded Maxey, in a tone which thrilled through us, at the same time turning deadly pale.

"Are you unwell?" said another, about to start up, for he believed our friend had suddenly been taken ill.

"For the love of God sit quiet!" rejoined the other, in a tone denoting extreme fear or pain, and he laid down his cards. "If you value my life move not."

"What can he mean? Has he taken leave of his senses?" demanded Churchill, appealing to myself.

"Don't start—don't move, I tell you!" in a sort of whisper I never can forget, uttered Maxey. "If you make any sudden motion I am a dead man!"

We exchanged looks. He continued,—

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"Remain quiet, and all may yet be well. I have a cobra capella round my leg."

Our first impulse was to draw back our chairs; but an appealing look from the victim induced us to remain, although we were aware that, should the reptile transfer but one fold and attach himself to any other of the party, that individual might already be counted as a dead man, so fatal is the bite of that dreaded monster.

Poor Maxey was dressed as many old residents still dress in India, namely, in breeches and silk stockings; he therefore the more plainly felt every movement of the snake. His countenance assumed a livid hue; the words seemed to leave his mouth without that feature altering its position, so rigid was his look—so fearful was he lest the slightest muscular movement should alarm the serpent, and hasten his fatal bite.

We were in agony little less than his own during the scene.

"He is coiling round!" murmured Maxey; "I feel him cold—cold to my limb; and now he tightens! For the love of heaven call for some milk! I dare not speak loud: let it be placed on the ground near me; let some be spilt on the floor."

Churchill cautiously gave the order, and a servant slipped out of the room.

"Don't stir! Northcote, you moved your head. By everything sacred I conjure you do not do so again! It cannot be long ere my fate is decided. I have a wife and two children in Europe; tell them I died blessing them, that my last prayers were for them;—the snake is winding itself round my calf;—I leave them all I possess. I can almost

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fancy I feel his breath! Great God, to die in such a manner!"

The milk was brought, and carefully put down; a few drops were sprinkled on the floor, and the affrighted servants drew back.

Again Maxey spoke:—

"No, no, it has no effect; on the contrary, he has clasped himself tighter—he has uncurled his upper fold! I dare not look down, but I am sure he is about to draw back, and give the bite of death with more fatal precision. Receive me, O Lord, and pardon me! My last hour is come! Again he pauses. I die firm; but this is past endurance. Ah! no; he has undone another fold, and loosens himself. Can he be going to some one else?" We involuntarily started. "For the love of heaven stir not—I am a dead man; but bear with me. He still loosens; he is about to dart! Move not, but beware! Churchill, he falls off that way. Oh! this agony is too hard to bear! Another pressure, and I am dead. No, he relaxes!" At that moment poor Maxey ventured to look down; the snake had unwound himself; the last coil *had* fallen, and the reptile was making for the milk.

"I am saved—saved!" and Maxey bounded from his chair, and fell senseless into the arms of one of his servants. In another instant (need it be added?) we were all dispersed, the snake was killed, and our poor friend carried more dead than alive to his room.

That scene I can never forget; it dwells on my memory still, strengthened by the fate of poor Maxey, who from that hour pined in hopeless imbecility, and sank into an early grave.

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DELIGHTS OF BENGAL.

I AROSE at *tope duggah* (gun-fire), and by the fast-breaking daylight rode uncomfortably along as far as the lines. When I say my ride was uncomfortable I feel myself borne out by the fact that the morning was foggy and damp, and that the dress I wore was that which every military officer wears in Bengal, namely, a complete suit of the very thinnest linen which can possibly be procured, *chunammed* (starched) till it becomes as stiff as buckram, and quite as disagreeable. I had been kept up late the night before, losing my money; so I rode sulkily along, alternately venting maledictions on my horse for his constant stumbles, which, by the by, every true Arabian indulges in, and somewhat galled in my proud feelings of manhood as I beheld my *syce* (groom) trot barefooted beside me, ready to hold my horse if I dismounted, or brush away the flies, should any dare to settle on him. The European in India seems soon to forget that the native is his fellow being, or he could hardly continue his boasts of superiority as lord of the creation, and yet allow a creature of the same species, endowed with every gift that manhood can boast save and except a white skin, to perform the most servile, the most degrading, the most revolting offices, without summoning up a blush of shame to the cheek of his fellow man. Yet such is the case. The poor syce who served me as a groundwork for these reflections had often

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before ran twenty and even thirty miles beside me, under a burning sun, footsore and panting, without a thought of the cruelty arising in my breast, so much had custom blunted my feelings and natural perceptions.

Arrived at the lines, I inspected the regiment of sepoys before me. A more steady body of troops I have never since beheld, although I have seen our own best corps, and visited several of the continental camps. It is true that an Indian lacks the physical force of an Englishman; yet for steadiness and endurance, a stern determination to follow his officer wheresoever he may lead, a readiness to obey his superior without question or murmur, no soldier on earth can excel the sepoy, who, fed upon rice, a stranger alike to meat and bed, yet makes an excellent appearance on parade, and a faithful follower in action.

Though the junior ensign, I was the only English officer on parade; so, after going through the usual forms, under the direction of the European sergeant-major, who ranks superior to the native captains—after receiving and returning the salute of the Indian officers, and inspecting the hospital in my quality of officer of the day—I cantered back to breakfast with our adjutant.

On passing through the verandah of my friend Thompson (the aforesaid adjutant), another specimen of Indian degradation met my view—a black woman squatted on the ground, acting as wet-nurse to a litter of young English pointers. I afterwards spoke to Thompson about it, who laughed at my scruples, and made my squeamishness a joke at mess.

We ate our fish, our rice, and *ghee*, made up a match at

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rackets, smoked a *chillum*, and then went to the *go down* (cellar) to taste a hogshead of claret my friend had received from Calcutta. To our infinite horror, however, we found a musk rat had passed over it, and (however fabulous it may appear to those who have never been in the East, yet those conversant with India will bear me out) every drop of the wine was spoiled — not a single glass was drinkable. The animal had merely run over it, and the entire of it was ordered to be thrown away.

When I returned home I found a native captain waiting for me, who, taking off his shoes, marched straight up to me, and, crying "halt" in a loud voice, stopped immediately before me; then saluting stiffly, told me that a soldier had just died in hospital; saluted again; then ordering himself in a loud voice to "right about face — quick march," he marched off accordingly. Scarcely was this man gone when a native havildar walked in, and gave me information of a similar event. He was followed by a corporal, and he in turn by another, and so on till I learnt from five reports that as many soldiers had breathed their last. Armed with this news I trotted off to the commandant's, and made my statement of the melancholy fact, to the no small surprise of the worthy colonel, who had hitherto looked upon our station as most healthy. The doctors were summoned, who denied the truth of my report. The adjutant was called for, who declared that I must have gone raving mad. In fact, a terrible fuss was made about it, which ended by the discovery that *only one* man was dead, but that etiquette required the circumstance to be mentioned to me by a native officer of each rank, and consequently I had displayed my

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thorough ignorance of the language and the military habits of the country, and, moreover, got well *wigged* for my pains.

As I was returning I met a young lady to whom I was sincerely attached jogging along in her palanquin, escorted by a party of spearmen, her father being an officer of rank. I stopped to speak to her, and was telling her my late disastrous adventure, when she suddenly gave a terrific scream. I flew towards her. A centipede had fastened itself by its hundred legs or prongs to her beautiful little foot. Her very bearers stood aghast. The surgeon, who was fortunately with me, instantly crushed the animal, which was about eight inches long, by a violent blow, even at the risk of injuring the foot, and ordered the men to carry her instantly home. For eleven weeks the poor girl suffered, and at length was forced to return to Europe, where she was compelled to undergo amputation.

Can any one wonder, then, that I hate a country where an accident the most likely to happen to any of us in the midst of our pleasures deprived me of the presence of a lovely and amiable woman?

I had little appetite for tiffin that day, and early repaired to the racket-court, where I spent two hours watching the exertions of a few half-livered Europeans, whose whole souls seemed divided between the game they were playing and the *brandy pawny* (brandy and water) which they were drinking.

On my return I chanced to call in at our major's, who had the best house in the cantonment. Whilst I was sitting chatting with him I happened to look up at a beam which crossed the ceiling, and observed several small insects moving about on it. Presently one dropped on the floor, which I

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instantly began to prick at with a light cane I carried. The major asked me what I was doing. I immediately explained, and picked up the little animal to show him, which he no sooner saw than he turned deadly pale, and, turning to his wife, instantly requested her to pack up and remove everything. "It is a white ant, my love." The lady so addressed immediately arose, and left the room. I asked for an explanation. It was given in few words.

"The insect you hold in your hand is a white ant. So destructive are its qualities, so rapid its propagation, that the moment one is seen the owner of the best house in India would give up his property, and leave it forthwith, rather than run the risk of almost certain destruction beneath its ruins by remaining. In twenty-four hours these little creatures will eat through the very thickest beam made use of in building. They are now in yonder roof, under which I shall not dare to sleep again; nor can I take even my clothes into another residence till they have been cleansed and fumigated, for fear of carrying one of these destructive creatures with me."

"Another temptation to reside in this blessed country!" groaned I, and walked off to the mess.

A better dinner I never saw. Our *bobachee* (cook) had excelled himself, and we were about to sit down to the tempting feast when a slight buzz was heard, and every one rose from the table. A small covey of flying bugs had just alighted on almost every dish before us. To guard against these insects and musquitoes each candle has a glass shade over it, each tumbler has a cover. But, alas! no covering could be put over the savoury viands, which, once touched by

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them, become nauseous, not only to the taste, but to the olfactory nerves; for these pests, which swarm through Bengal, and are about double the size of the European bug, smell so strong that anything touched by one of them never afterwards loses the taint.

We were all forced to leave the table and adjourn the meal till another was dressed.

That evening I went to see the *doorgah poojah*, a religious ceremony, where I was sickened by beholding a live goat sacrificed to a many-armed goddess called Vishnu, and had my clothes soiled by the deity-powder they threw over me, in addition to the nausea created by the redolent fumes of cajeput oil, with which the idolaters had rubbed themselves.

At home I lost my money at whist, and was set down as a regular milksop because I would not bet on a race between two maggots.

Tired and fagged I retired to my bed, or rather, bedstead; for over a mat were spread two sheets only, tied to the lower bedposts, while a thin gauze inclosed me in in a sort of cage to keep away the musquitoes, and the legs of the bedstead were placed in little saucers of water to keep the ants from climbing up, while winch-pillars of basket-work covered with oilcloth supported my limbs, and allowed a current of air to pass under them.

About two hours after I had thus retired I was awoke by the most agonising pain all over my face. By the light which I always burnt in my room I discovered that, through a slight rent in my musquito curtains, those plagues had intruded and stung my face all over, which compelled me to

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get up and have my cheeks bathed in lime juice, while other curtains were put up.

I now again sought repose, and for a short time with success. At length I suddenly awoke, I know not from what cause, and saw a cobra manilla (the most deadly of all serpents) lying on the table within a couple of feet of my bed. I never can forget or describe my horror at that instant. The beautiful monster, attracted no doubt by the light, was moving quickly about the table. I felt the chances were that, attracted by the warmth, he would come towards me. I therefore conceived it best to call for assistance, and did so in a subdued voice, for my full utterance was gone. In an instant my old favourite English setter bounded into the room, and jumped towards the bed. The snake seemed to shrink into half its natural size. I could not take my eyes off it. Alas! my poor dog, accustomed to watch and to comply with my every look, seeing my attention attracted towards the table, instantly placed his two fore-paws on it. Quicker than lightning I saw the snake dart at his throat, and in the next moment vanish. The servants by this time arrived. The cobra manilla was gone. In spite of the most minute search it could never be found. Poor Carlo died in strong convulsions, and in the greatest agony I ever saw a dog endure.

I got up and dressed myself. I applied next day for leave to return to Europe. I have since married, and continually now amuse myself by opposing those who, from bad taste or ignorance, talk of the comforts, the luxuries of British India!

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THE SNAKE-CHARMER.

I CONFESS when I heard that the snake-charmer had arrived in the cantonment I was quite delighted. Curious beyond measure to behold a specimen of his powers, I repaired early to the commandant's, where I had agreed to breakfast, and afterwards became one of the spectators of his attempts to entrap, by fascination, some of these reptiles. It had long been suspected that Colonel E——'s garden was infested by more than one of these dreaded monsters; we therefore repaired thither, where we found the juggler awaiting us. The man had nothing extraordinary in his appearance—nothing attractive in his eye or manner. He was as common a looking native as I had ever seen. To what caste these people belong I know not; I rather suspect a very low caste.

When we entered the inclosure we at once desired him to set about his task, which he did thus:—He placed himself immediately in front of the hole in which one of the serpents was supposed to lurk, placing at the same time a *kedgeree-pot* (an earthen jar) near him, and desiring his assistant to cover the reptile with it on a certain signal being given. He then took from his *cummerbund* (sash) a small pipe, which he instantly began to play on in a style which, I confess, seemed to me anything *but* likely to *charm*. Its noise was that of the smallest and shrillest-sized fife, only differing from that instrument in being played upon at the end in the

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same manner as a flageolet. The tune he performed was monotonous and disagreeable.

For about ten minutes the piping of our juggler, which he accompanied with strange contortions, had no effect, and we were once or twice on the point of turning away, when he entreated us by his looks to remain and watch the result. At the end of that time we could see, by the fixedness of the man's eye, that he saw his victim approaching; in another instant the head of a large cobra capella peered from the hole. We naturally shrank back. The charmer, however, seemed rather delighted than dismayed as the monster emerged from its earthy home. Presently its whole length appeared. A more magnificent snake I had never seen; and I must admit that it seemed fascinated by the juggler, who now slowly retreated a few paces to show his power. As he moved the serpent moved; when he stopped the serpent did the same. The eye of the snake seemed magnetically riveted on that of the charmer, depending on and watching his every movement. The man assured me afterwards that, had he ceased to play for a single instant, the cobra capella would have sprang on him and destroyed him. I certainly never saw anything more curious; but I must confess that the very close proximity of this death-dealing monster was by no means pleasing to my feelings.

When the man (followed at about five yards' distance by the snake) arrived at a smooth spot in the middle of the garden he suddenly squatted down, and began to play louder and more energetically than before. The animal paused for a moment, then raising itself, stood upright, reared on its tail, in the same position as that which it often assumes previously

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to making the fatal spring. Imagining this to be the case, a trembling shudder went round that portion of the party who had never before witnessed a similar exhibition. The old hands, the regular *Qui Hies* (a nickname given to Bengalese), stood perfectly unmoved. They were aware of what was about to follow. The snake, thus painfully poised, began a sort of bounding up and down, keeping its eyes steadily fixed on the musician, almost in time to the tune he was playing. Europeans who have never visited British India may doubt the fact; but those who have been in the East will bear me out in the truth of the following assertion. The cobra capella actually danced for several minutes on its tail, apparently charmed with the uncouth music the juggler was playing. In the meantime the native boy stole round, and, on a certain signal given by his master, suddenly dropped the *kedgeree-pot* on the snake. A strong waxed cloth was passed under it, drawn up, and tied. The fatigued musician got up, salaamed to the company, and carried his captive into the house, where he had several others similarly imprisoned. In about half an hour the same thing was repeated with precisely similar effect. Out of the four snakes said to lurk in the garden one only escaped his fascination, and this one failure he ascribed to the presence of an evil eye amongst our followers. Even in these remote parts the same superstition respecting the "evil eye" exists that tinges the minds of half the students in the German universities.

The next exhibition of his powers was given in the hall, when certainly he performed tricks and wonders, which I shall not, however, set down. Had I not seen them I should not have believed them. I cannot, therefore, expect that my

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readers should do so, and will not risk my reputation for veracity by relating them.

Being desirous of seeing a combat between a snake and its inveterate enemy, the mungooze (an animal similar to the ichneumon of Egypt), I requested the charmer to exhibit a fight of the kind. He instantly consented (as all of these men carry not only snakes, but mungoozes with them), and led us out into the compound—the field attached to almost every house in cantonments. Having expressed our fears lest any of the party might be injured by the reptile, he proposed that the exhibition should take place under an enormous pheasant-coop of worked wire which was lying unused in the courtyard. This arrangement was acceded to, and, at our suggestion, the snake first taken in the morning was selected for the encounter. The mouth of the vessel in which he was inclosed was placed under the edge of the coop, and the covering suddenly withdrawn. In a moment after the cobra capella darted out. The *kedgeree*-pot was then taken away, and the edges of the pheasantry let down. During two or three minutes the monster poked his nose all round the inclosure, evidently wishing to escape; but, finding this impossible, he quietly coiled himself up, freeing, however, his magnificent head from the folds, and remained in a sort of listening attitude.

Presently the man produced the mungooze, and let him in to his adversary. Never was I more surprised. This was the first time I had seen one. I had expected to behold a somewhat powerful opponent. Never could I have fancied that so small an animal would have dared to cope with serpents of the largest and deadliest kind; such, however,

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was the case. The little creature, which now sniffed round the edge of the coop, was about half as large again as an English rat, of a mottled colour, with small red eyes, and would have been a very ugly animal had it not been for its tail, which was long and bushy, in circumference near the centre almost as large as the little body to which it was attached. For a time the mungooze ran about without going direct up to the snake, which, however, having perceived its tormentor on its first entrance, had prepared to give him battle. Suddenly the tiny creature, which seemed to be little more than a single mouthful to its adversary, saw the snake, and without hesitation ran at it. So apparently unequal a contest I never beheld. The cobra capella had reared itself and spread out its hood, a sort of fleshy cape it inflates when irritated, and which has given rise to its designation. The marks round its eyes resembled a pair of spectacles. Its marble-stained scales seemed all alive as it raised itself some three feet high to meet the attack of the little savage, whose fiery eyes seemed suddenly to glow like red-hot cinders as it rushed towards its mighty enemy and bit it. The snake darted at it, squeezed it, inflicted its dreadful wound, and then drew itself back. The mungooze was evidently disabled. Faint and almost dying, it retreated. Many of us fancied the battle over, and regretted the untimely end of the courageous little beast. After limping about for some minutes, and even lying down with exhaustion, the mungooze began to poke its nose in the grass. What it swallowed none have ever been able to trace, though large rewards have been offered for the discovery. What the herb is which this little animal partakes of none can tell, but certainly its

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effects are miraculous; for no sooner did the creature imbibe the sought-for antidote than it suddenly recovered its pristine strength, and again attacked the serpent. This scene was re-enacted no less than seven times, each time the cobra appearing weaker and weaker, till actually tired out. The mungooze at length succeeded in catching the monster by the throat, and destroying it, to the surprise and admiration of all present.

To those who have not seen the manner in which goats are trained to play almost every trick by these men it is extraordinary to witness the docility and intelligence they exhibit, performing some of the most curious and difficult gymnastics I ever saw attempted.

The final triumph of the juggler consisted in his attempt, which was crowned with success, to discover a thief who had hitherto eluded detection. Well might it be said,

"Finis coronat opus."

In this case certainly it was well borne out. He left us most strangely impressed with his ability and powers, having extorted from an unsuspected robber a full and voluntary confession. His mode was most simple. He called for some dry rice, over which he performed sundry rites and uttered several prayers. He then drew up every servant in the colonel's establishment in a row, and, giving each a handful of rice, desired them to chew it, informing them, in the most cool manner, that Vishnu would instantly point out the culprit by withholding from him the power of grinding the rice between his teeth. If he attempted to do so she of the many arms would instantly annihilate him. He there-

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fore called on them one and all to try their powers of crunching, promising that the thief should thereby be convicted and the innocence of the others be made manifest. We naturally smiled at the simplicity of the test, little expecting that the result would prove satisfactory. How surprised were we, then, on seeing the snake-charmer walk straight up to one of the bearers, and instantly challenge him to spit out into a plate the rice he had been vainly trying to chew. The man hesitated, his muscles seemed suddenly to collapse, and his sable countenance turned pale. In less than five minutes the unhappy wretch was on his knees confessing his various depredations and embezzlements. The rice was untouched by his teeth, and, however much we chose to laugh at the superstition, we could not help admiring the scheme which had thus extorted from the culprit a confession of his guilt.

I have since seen the same experiment tried to discover a thief, and, strange to relate, have never known it fail.

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A SUTTEE

THIS act of self-sacrifice, which was formerly a frequent event, and is often spoken of in England as an every-day occurrence in India, has now become so rare that I did not hesitate to go and see a ceremony of the kind which was announced as about to take place, although I had to travel nearly forty miles by *dawk banghy* to reach the spot where it was to be consummated. Never did I pass a more unpleasant night than that in which I suffered myself to be jolted about in a palanquin across a detestable country; for I ought to state, in case my reader is not acquainted with this mode of travelling, that journeying by *dawk banghy* is nothing more nor less than posting per palanquin with four bearers, *almost* stark naked, wearing only a very small covering to avoid absolute indecency, a turban on their heads, and a small pad on their shoulder, carrying you along at the rate of about four miles or four miles and a half an hour, a relief of the same number running beside them to take the burden in turn at the end of about each mile and a half.

To travel in the daytime would have been to risk my life. It is true I have often seen my foolhardy countrymen do so, but I have ever myself looked upon such an act, unless on an occasion of life and death, as a deed of extreme folly or madness. What man in his proper senses, may I ask, would box himself up in a machine little better, little larger, than a wadded coffin, the ordinary length of a palanquin being

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eight feet, its breadth three, and depth about the same? Who, I ask, in such a wooden case would choose to jolt about for several consecutive hours under a sun which, darting on the *out*, soon causes the *in*side to glow like a baker's oven? And yet I have occasionally seen Europeans dance about Calcutta in one of these living sepulchres till the wretched bearers have almost fallen from fatigue and heat!

On the occasion I now speak of I travelled by night; but, alas! I gained little by it. Not a breath of air was stirring; the musquitoes flew in and stung me; the beautiful fire-fly flitted about like a fiery star, while some parts of the jungle through which we passed seemed actually alive with them, the bushes appearing as a mass of brilliant and shining light. I could hear the screeching jackal, and more than once fancied I could distinguish the cry of the "fayho," which filled me with dread, as he is the constant companion of the tiger. As we passed along, our lights (for the four relief bearers carried torches to frighten the wild animals and direct our course) occasionally scared the wild dog, who fled howling away. Birds, disturbed from their roosts, flew hooting over us. An exclamation now and then from my sup porters would tell how fearfully they had beheld a snake in their path, or received a sharp puncture from a quill ejected by some alarmed porcupine. However naturalists may differ on this subject, I can positively affirm that these little animals have the power of shooting their quills forth when enraged or frightened. In the island of Ceylon I once saw the leg of a native severely wounded by one. In Bengal the porcupine is more rare and less ferocious. But to return to my story.

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Unable to sleep, unrefreshed by a single breath of air, I marked all these annoyances with terror and disgust, and inwardly vowed, unless most especially compelled to do so, never again to travel per *dawk banghy*. The hours seemed interminable. It was in vain I attempted to court slumber. The monotonous song of the bearers sounded more gloomily than ever in my ears. Every disagreeable thought that had ever rankled in my mind arose in dread array before me. No wonder, then, that I uttered an exclamation of joy as they lowered my palanquin at the door of James M'Phail, an indigo planter, who resided close to the spot where the suttee was to take place.

It was just daybreak, but I found my friend up and stirring, doing the honours of his house to a large company of Europeans, who had come to behold the strange ceremony. Amongst others were a local judge and another magistrate, who had ridden over officially to try and dissuade the wretched fanatic from immolating herself, and had brought with them two companies of sepoys and their officers to protect her, should she consent to forego the dreadful rite. The British orders on this head are most clear. The authorities are forbidden to interfere, or forcibly prevent the suicidal immolation of a religious enthusiast who chooses to destroy herself on the funeral pile with the dead body of her husband; but, at the same time, they are commanded to be present, to urge the unhappy victim to avoid the dreadful sacrifice, and, in case of her consent, to promise her defence and support from the government. A sufficient force is also marched to the ground to overawe and prevent any opposition by the natives, should the infatuated female relent from her fell purpose,

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and throw herself on the protection of the British authorities.

After making an excellent breakfast, and taking half a dozen whiffs at the hookahs our host had provided for us, we sallied forth. We were just in time. The pile was placed in the centre of a large field. It was about twelve feet square and four feet high. Every species of dry wood had been made use of to form it. The outward parts were of far more solid branches than the centre, which I could evidently see was filled up with brushwood and small twigs, so that when the edges were lighted and the victim rushed to the centre she would at once sink amidst the flames. The corpse of her deceased husband lay bare upon the pile, surrounded by his relatives as well as her own, who stood close to this part of the scene, uttering alternately lamentations and songs of joy. The players on the tom-tom (a sort of small noisy drum) were *seated* on the opposite side; the Brahmins and faqueers stood at the head. A crowd of at least a thousand natives surrounded the inner ring, into which, as Englishmen, we boldly entered. Our sepoys were drawn up at about two hundred yards distant, so as to show our power, but at the same time to prove our determination not to interfere unless called on to do so.

Presently a hackery came creaking into the field, surrounded by religious men and women of all classes and orders, shouting, singing, and throwing flowers and aromatic powder under the feet of the oxen that drew the cart, and on the person of the female who sat inside it. It was evident that they were mad from excitement or

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drunk from opium. Their gestures were frantic, their cries terrific. At length the hackery arrived beside the ring, and the young girl sprang out of it. She was not above fourteen, and certainly one of the sweetest-looking natives I ever recollect seeing. The British judge instantly went up to her, and, drawing her aside, energetically remonstrated with her on her wickedness and folly in thus sacrificing her life. She would scarcely hear him out. She was, I verily believe, more than half intoxicated, and seemed to pant for the coming moment, anxious to prove her unshaken constancy to her late husband, as well as desirous of showing her courage. Flying, therefore, from the magistrate, she rushed towards the Brahmins, who quickly handed her on to the pile, and, giving her a lighted torch, began a sort of chant, accompanied by the tom-toms, whilst they and others lighted their brands. Suddenly a signal was given, and the suicide herself threw her burning torch into the furze, which as instantly ignited. She then began to sing furiously, madly dancing about on the fatal pile. At the same instant her friends and the priests of Brahma set fire to it in every direction. The flames arose—I could still see the victim throwing herself about in every attitude of joy and triumph. At length the fire touched her, and human nature triumphed —I heard her distinctly scream. It was all that I was allowed to hear from her; for at that moment every tom-tom, every instrument, every voice was raised as loud as possible, undoubtedly to drown her cries. It was evident to me that agony had sobered her, and that she not only shrieked, but even attempted to escape her doom; but it was now, alas! too late. The crowd pressed close to the

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pile, and we were quietly, but effectually squeezed out of the ring. I could still see the flames rising majestically from this pagan altar, and could, I fancied, hear the cries of the devoted victim; but it was, alas! now out of our power to assist her. She had refused our succour—we were bound not to interfere. I turned away with an aching heart, and returned to M'Phail's residence.

I visited the spot next day; the grass was burnt up where the pile had stood; nothing else betokened the sacrifice, or indicated the exact place where I had beheld the "suttee."

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ADVENTURES OF A BLUE JACKET.

A TRUE STORY.

MANY years ago it was found necessary to besiege the fort called Budge-Budge, some few miles down the river from Calcutta, which the natives held in spite of our remonstrances, probably supported in their hostile obstinacy by the Dutch and French governments, who, as all the world knows, have several settlements in the East Indies. These settlements we could wrest from them in an instant, but, for some unaccountable reason or other, we had allowed them to remain in their hands, to the no small hinderance of justice and equity, since it frequently happens that characters deserving punishment for their offences have merely to cross the river, and in ten minutes are beyond the pale of British law, having found refuge in Chinsurah, or some other foreign town. The existence of these little colonies has a still worse effect in case of disaffection amongst the Indians, inasmuch as they are ever ready to pour forth foreign emissaries, who urgently foment the feud, and mislead the poor natives by holding out hopes of assistance from their respective countries.

Such had been the case with Budge-Budge, the aforesaid fort, before which a couple of frigates and some armed boats were lying at the time of my sketch. The native garrison, which amounted to about six hundred men, had

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vainly been summoned to surrender. They vowed they would rather die than do so. For three days long shots had been fired at them; but, as the fortress was built of mud, no sooner was the smallest breach made than it was instantly closed up, and rebuilt stronger than ever. One of the commanders advised the adoption of a storming party; his brother officer, however, differed from him, urging that the place was too well garrisoned to be easily carried by assault. The opinions of the two leaders were forwarded to Calcutta, and the reply was expected to be returned on the morrow.

James Bunting (so we will call the old tar) heard all these *palavers*, as he styled them, and looked very knowing. He understood there was a chance of fighting, so he felt perfectly delighted. To his berth he descended, and, as usual when he was particularly happy, managed to get particularly drunk, and turned in evidently the worse for liquor. Now it so happened that in about an hour after he had thus settled himself in his hammock he suddenly awoke. A burning fever, an agonising thirst parched his mouth, so he arose and went to his locker; but, alas! he had drunk every drop of liquid he possessed, and where to find more he knew not. On board the vessel he had no hopes; shore was his only chance; so, unseen by any one, he made his way into the water by lowering himself from the chains, or from a port-hole, or some such place, and struck out for the beach, where he landed safely, in spite of alligators, sentinels, and all other similar oppositions.

When he had shaken the water from his hair and hitched up his trousers he began to look around for a toddy shop,

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where he could purchase some of that liquor or some arrack, to take the chill off the water he had swallowed; but, alas! no building of the kind met his view—not a single habitation could he see. The fort frowned gloomily over him in sullen grandeur; no other place where spirits were likely to be found could he discover, though he peered anxiously round on every side. To lose his time, to be laughed at by his comrades on his return for the wild-goose chase he had undertaken, was by no means palatable to Bunting. To be balked is a maxim unknown to a British sailor; so, rather than lose his grog, he determined to lose his life, or, at all events, risk it. Without farther ado he began scaling the walls of the fort. This he easily managed, and in a few moments found himself at the top of the glacis. Elated at his success, he began shouting as loud as ever he could bawl, to the horror of the garrison, who, instantly fancying themselves assailed, started up, and were about to run to the spot where they supposed the attacking party had made good a lodgment, when Jim, who had scampered round the defences, again began to shout from the opposite side, and, suddenly lowering himself into the town itself, commenced cheering as loud as he could, intermingling his vociferations with cries for liquor.

Assailed, as they supposed, on both sides, the enemy actually *in* the fortress, surprised in the middle of the night, expecting nothing less than to be cut to pieces in the dark, what could they do? The bravest might well hesitate. Unable to get their forces together, confused, and astounded, they naturally believed that they had been betrayed. They had but one course left to pursue. They opened the gates, and fled as fast and as far as their feet would carry them, leaving the

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town in the quiet and peaceable possession of James Bunting, who, after shouting vainly for some time, fell down, and slept for a couple of hours. He awoke perfectly sober, though about as much puzzled at finding himself alone, and in the enemy's fort, as the poor man was in the "Arabian Nights" when he suddenly found himself transformed into an eagle.

Jim rubbed his eyes, he pinched his legs, and, walking up to a tank, actually drank three mouthsful of water before he could believe that he was awake. He then strutted up to the ramparts, and convinced himself that he was in his proper senses, for there lay the two frigates, and there floated the union-jack for which he had often risked his life. "Shiver my timbers! but this is a queer go!" said he; and with that he hitched up his trousers as usual, and shook the pigtail, which then hung from every sailor's head.

The vessels, perceiving a man thus expose himself, began to fire at him.

"Avast there!" shouted Jim; but, as they did not hear him or attend to him, he ran to the principal battery, and, climbing up the flagstaff, pulled down the Dutch colours, and hoisted up a ragged old turban he found lying in one of the streets. The commanders of the vessels thought this extremely odd. Something strange had evidently happened; so they sent a boat on shore bearing a flag of truce, carried by the first lieutenant of one of the frigates. Unmolested the party marched *up* to the fort; and, as the gates were open, unmolested they marched *into* it. Not a soul did they meet till Jim strutted up to them.

"Hollos, you sir, what's the meaning of this?" said the

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first lieutenant to Bunting in a voice of anger; for it was sadly *infra dig.* for an officer of his rank to have been thus sent off to parley with a common sailor. "What 's the meaning of this?"

"Please your honour, I hope you won't be angry, Leeftenant; but, somehow or other, I 've taken this place. The enemy have cut the painter and sheered off."

"What!" cried the superior, "*you* took the fort?"

Jim nodded.

"And pray who the devil gave you leave to do so, I should much like to know? Get on board, sir, directly."

"Ay, ay, sir," replied Jim respectfully, instantly doing as he was desired.

In the meantime the lieutenant went and formally took possession of the place by running up the British colours; then writing a most pompous despatch, in which he recommended the real captor to be tried for leaving his ship without permission, he sent it back by a young midshipman, remaining behind himself with half a dozen sailors, in order, as he expressed it, to garrison the fort.

Strange to say his recommendation was attended to, and Jim Bunting brought to a court-martial, who most reluctantly were compelled to find him guilty, adjudging him, however, to undergo the least possible punishment that could be inflicted for so glaring a breach of discipline. Jim felt highly indignant at the turn things had taken. He could not help fancying himself an ill-used man, but he bore it stoically. When, however, he heard the verdict delivered—when he heard himself pronounced guilty, he once more hitched up his nether garments, and exclaimed in an audible voice as he left

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the cabin, "Dowse my glim if ever I take another fort as long as I live."

Need I add that though, to satisfy the strictness of the law, to which all in the navy must bow, the verdict of guilty was brought in, he was afterwards amply praised and rewarded by his superiors?

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CURE FOR THE AGUE.

In no country on earth is the ague felt with greater violence than in India. Heaven help the unfortunate person whom it attacks! Nothing but a trip to Europe will shake it off, and even that sometimes fails to establish a permanent cure. Once visited by this dreadful malady, the unfortunate sufferer seldom escapes without several returns, even though years elapse between the intervals of this paralysing disorder. The native who sees a white man thus affected sincerely believes that he is so tortured by a devil that has taken up his abode within his person, and consequently recommends him to try every sort of charm to scare the demon away. The English doctor, when consulted, is sure to prescribe a sea voyage as the best chance of recovery. I once knew a lady who was a martyr to this horrible, this torturing complaint. It had attacked her just as she was slowly recovering after her confinement. She applied to her physician, who ordered her instantly to return to Europe. The Brahmin who happened to be on her domain at the time laughed at the remedy, declaring that, "unless Master Debbil him choose to fly away, change of air no good." The lady's husband explained to the Hindoo priest that he looked upon him as a goose. He shook the doctor by the hand (for he was an excellent husband), and immediately began to prepare for his wife's departure.

It unluckily so happened, however, that the disorder had

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arrived at such a height that Mrs. A—— had not been able to move *from*, or almost *in*, her bed for six weeks. It was, therefore, determined that she should wait until a lull in her pains permitted her removal to the boat which was to convey her on board the first ship of the season returning to Europe.

Now, as ladies who have long resided in India are considered far more delicate in their tastes and habits than the rosy nymphs who have passed their days in northern climates, Mr. A—— began to lay in a stock of what is styled "private store," consisting of eatables and drinkables of the most dainty description, for the use of his wife; not but that he knew the living on board a homeward-bound Indiaman to be luxurious beyond description, and as unlike the coarse feeding in an outward-bound vessel as

"Hyperion to a satyr."

So, also, are the prices; for the lady in question, with her maid-servant, had voyaged out for two hundred pounds. In returning she had agreed to pay for herself, her two children, and two maid-servants, one thousand pounds! So certainly she had a right to expect better entertainment; but, with all this, her princely husband thought it as well that she should have a private stock of luxuries, in case her appetite should be delicate. He therefore got pickled oysters, choice Burgundy, portable soups, and all kinds of delicacies packed up to take with her. He judged, however, rightly, that no wine, no eatable would be half so acceptable as good water on board a ship; for, despite of all filters and every other remedy, water long preserved tastes very nasty, percolation only removing the objects floating in the liquid. Whatever exists

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in a state of solution is irremediable, so that the bilgy water of the long-encased *pseudo* fresh, is quite as disgusting as if no pains had been taken to cleanse it.

The water of Chittagong is the only water which never changes. At the end of three years it is quite as clear and fresh (that is, when well bottled) as it is when first taken from the spring. To insure his wife this luxury Mr. A—— sent all the way to Chittagong, and procured three hundred dozen of this refreshing beverage, which, previous to packing in hampers, were placed on the long rows of banqueting-tables which stood in the grand hall of his residence near Moorshedabad. His wife's sleeping-room opened into this hall, while her newly-born child, only two months old, inhabited a room on the other side of the building.

On the evening of—— (whatever date you like) Mrs. A—— was suffering more than ordinarily. So acute were the semi-rheumatic pains which accompanied the ague that she was actually unable to turn in her bed, and her doctor began to shake his head, and talk gloomily about the probable result. Mr. A—— was in despair. The hope of being able to reach Europe was almost given up by the patient herself, who began to believe, though usually of a sanguine disposition, that she was beyond the hope of cure.

It was just past midnight, and the sufferer had fallen into an uneasy sleep. The nurses and other faithful watchers were snoring soundly, when a sudden crash shook the whole building—a crash more terrific than that of the loudest thunder, or the roar of a whole park of artillery. The house shook as if moved by an earthquake—the noise seemed like that of a wing of the mansion falling in.

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How beautiful, how pure is the mind of woman! How superior to that of the male sex! A man thus awakened would have instantly thought of self. Mrs. A—— was a mother, a fond mother. The thought of her infant, instantly flashed across her mind. "My child—my boy!" cried she, distractedly; and with one bound she sprang from her bed, and, before her alarmed and astonished attendants had recovered their wits, their mistress—their late bedridden mistress—was half across the marble hall, up to her ankles in water, rushing forward with anxious cries towards the chamber of her child, whom she found lying quietly sleeping, in its cradle, unalarmed, unconscious of the appalling sounds which had disturbed and frightened every one else, the smile of happy innocence playing round its mouth.

The revulsion of feeling was so strong, the joy so great, that Mrs. A—— fell down perfectly insensible. In this state she was found by her astonished husband, who could scarcely believe his eyes when he saw what maternal love could effect. Yes, the affection of a mother had done that which art had vainly essayed. When Mrs. A—— again became sensible the malady had left her—she was perfectly cured.

The noise had arisen from the tables having given way beneath the enormous weight of the bottled water, which, breaking on the marble floor, had caused the dreadful crash which had alarmed the sufferer. Under the greater alarm of danger to her child her own feelings had yielded, and pain had fled, overcome by a mother's fond affection.

The black people swear, even to this hour, that it was "the

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devil escaping from his victim that upset the tables and threw down the bottles; for, as Jessaree Mahomed (the aforementioned Brahmin) wisely argues, "If debbil not fly away, how debbil missee fly to her *chuckerah?*" (child). Dr. M—— doubts this assertion, but still can give no satisfactory reason for the sudden, yet permanent disappearance of the dreadful malady which had been so long tormenting his fair patient.

Mrs. A—— lived many years happily and healthily in India after this occurrence, and ate and drank her sea stores on eastern land. As to her child, he grew up to bless his parent and write this sketch.

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A STRIKING INCIDENT.

Mrs. Machewel was the wife of one of the first civilians in Bengal. Jealous of her rank and precedence, she never went abroad without her "gold sticks and branch lights." As these expressions may be as unintelligible as Sanscrit itself to the uninitiated reader, I must begin by explaining that, as there is little or no difference in the birth of the preponderating mass of British residents in India, it has been wisely settled that all persons in the service should take rank according to the post they hold and the number of years they have served, thus holding out a chance of high honour and precedence to all who choose to remain long in the country. Where the aristocratic distinctions of hereditary title are almost unknown the aristocracy of wealth naturally springs up. It is, therefore, not to be wondered at that the civilian is looked upon with far greater respect than the gallant officer, who, preferring glory to guineas, and abandoning the accumulation of sovereigns to risk his life with pleasure for the sovereign of his loved country, wears the little gold he possesses on his outward habiliments, willing to exchange the feverish throb of conscious wealth for the light heart and gaudy trappings of war.

After the Governor-General, the Supreme Council, and the Puisne Judges come the senior merchants, according to their posts and standing, then the superior field-officers, the junior merchants, military officers according to their grades,

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indigo planters, and persons without official situations, half-castes, natives, and pariah dogs. Thus I think I have given the whole chain. *Humanum est errare.* I may be wrong, but I think not.

Now the precedence of these fictitious grades in society is not by any means confined to the ball-room or the dinner-table. It would not content these persons only to be distinguished by being handed into the banquet or out of the room before others of less pretensions, but they require the same deference to be shown to them even in the very streets. When I say *they* I do not mean the poor straw-coloured gentlemen themselves, who are better engaged than in running about showing off their distinctions. I allude to their wives, who are as proud of these demonstrations of dignity as a well-bred peacock is of his superb tail. They therefore dash about, distinguished in their rank according to the following graduating scale:—

Number one has her palanquin surrounded by a crowd of bearers and khitmutgars calling out the hyperbolical virtues and attributes of their master, shouting out to every one to make way for the Cousin of the Moon and the Wise Star of the West, and also attesting the superior rank of their lord by brandishing about a golden or silver-gilt cudgel, which marks the rank of the person they serve; and at night, in order that his glory shall even shine through the darkness, they bear branched candlesticks with wax candles lighted in them, thus proclaiming that the person they attend has reached the highest honours in the Company's service.

Number two is only entitled to carry silver sticks, and no branch lights.

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Number three is attended by several of her servants, bearing spears with long red tassels.

Number four may have as many servants and followers as she likes, but not a spear, not a stick, not a candlestick may she allow to appear; while, worse than all, if number four meets number three in a narrow road, or on a rampart, or any other place where there is only properly room for one, number four must allow herself to be pushed into the ditch or down the declivity to make way for her superior, her only consolation being that she well knows number three will be served with just as little ceremony if she meets number two, and so on.

Having thus premised we will return to the thread of our narrative. *A propos* to Mrs. Machewel, her son, a fine lad of sixteen, had just arrived from Europe. Unacquainted with all the details I have just given, careless, good-natured, and impetuous, he stood on little ceremony with his more staid and pompous parent; and, as he was an only son, he feared little the chidings of his mother or the long harangues of his "old governor," as he was wont to call his father.

The morning after his arrival he saw his mamma's palanquin, with its numerous suite, standing ready before the porch to take her out shopping in the Loll Bazaar. Now it so happened that at that very instant Master Tom was considering how he could best get conveyed to Fort William, where he was anxious to go and call upon some of his friends, who had come out to India on board the same ship with him; so, without asking permission, Tom jumped into the palanquin and trotted off to the fort, fortunately having by accident closed the blinds; for on his way he passed the

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less aristocratic palanquins of several junior civilians, who would have instantly laid a complaint against the young soldier had they known that he had thus dared to borrow the honours only reserved for old civilians. Had they done so Tom Machewel would inevitably have been severely punished. Arrived in the barracks our hero was perfectly happy. He laughed, jested, and joined in all the practical jokes and boisterous exercises which make India endurable; for, strange to say, the *dolce far niente* of other warm climates is here exchanged for rackets, fives, and similar violent games.

Amongst other treasures poured upon our youngster by his comrades, with whom he was an universal favourite, was a very large monkey of the ourang-outang species, who walked upright, leaning on a stick, could drink a glass of grog, and play a thousand amusing antics, to the delight of his now proud possessor.

How to get this animal to his residence was a puzzle to poor Tom, who, with the usual impetuosity of his character, was dying to send it home directly, but was gravely assured by every one that no Indian would touch him or have anything to do with such an animal for the world. It is true Jack Sharp offered to take him to Calcutta in his buggy (all gigs are so called in Bengal) if he would wait till the evening. Tom hated procrastination, and therefore laid a plan for packing him off forthwith.

First of all the jolly ensign desired his mother's palanquin to be brought up into the long barrack passage, and, sending off the servants, managed with the help of his comrades to thrust Jacko, stick and all, into it, and, closing the doors,

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fastened them so that the animal could not get out. He next took a scrap of paper and scribbled on it:—

"DEAREST MOTHER,—I don't dine at home to-day. Take great care of the monkey you will find in the palanquin. Give him something to eat, and pay every attention to him as you love

"Your affectionate son,

"TOM."

He then recalled the bearers, the *peons*,* and the *khitmutgars*, and desired them to take the palanquin home, and deliver the note, which he gave to one of the gold sticks, to his mother, and on no account to disturb a sick gentleman who was lying inside the vehicle, or presume to undo the doors till they arrived at his father's house. With these orders the men jolted merrily along across the esplanade which lies between the city of Calcutta and the citadel which protects it.

Now it so happened that Master Jacko was not particularly pleased with the motion of his conveyance, and began to get fidgety. He strove to open the doors, but, as I said before, they were locked. He examined every corner of the carriage, and at length found the windows, which open at the foot of it, and which Tom had never thought of. One of these Jacko managed to open, and though he could not get through it he found great delight in sitting at it, grinning and chuckling, and poking his stick through the aperture at the heads of the bearers, who were within half a yard of him.

* Messengers. It is from this word we have derived the word *pawn*, applicable to the lowest grade of chessmen.

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The poor men, feeling a rude blow every now and then inflicted on their turbans, hastened their pace as fast as they could, for every fresh stroke they fancied was a hint to hurry on; so they increased their speed, and struggled to exert themselves more and more with each poke. Never did bearers travel faster, impelled by this uncouth but clear notice to make haste. They astonished every one who met them by their rapid strides; they even dared to call out as the strokes became more frequent, entreating the *burra sahib* to relent, assuring him they were doing all they could to get on. The *peons* were actually so out of breath that they could no longer shout out the titles of the "Great Machewel." The fresh relay were preparing to relieve their brethren with terror, when a sudden, sharp, well-directed blow brought one of the bearers to the ground, and with him, of course, the palanquin. At this unexpected jerk Jacko popped his head out of the front window, and with an unearthly cry began to grin in the most terrific manner.

The Indians gave but one glance. They beheld, as they believed, the devil—the devil in his worst and ugliest form. The sick gentleman had probably been eaten up by him. They gave one roaring chorus of affrighted screams, and, without again looking round, set off as hard as they could run.

Some civilians of rank who were passing, seeing from a short distance the fall of the palanquin and the flight of the bearers, rushed up to assist their friend (for from his distinguishing honours they recognised the equipage of Machewel), and extricate him from his unpleasant position. Followed by their servants they actually descended from their own

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palanquins, and ran across to the succour of their colleague With some difficulty they burst open the doors. Mr. Maloney put forth his hand to help his friend out. To his horror he felt it suddenly bitten. Calcott bent forward his head to look for Machewel, but he suddenly received a blow on it. The next minute out sprang Jacko, who with a cry of delight bounded off towards Chowringee, where he was shortly afterwards recaptured and brought back to the fort.

In the meantime the offended civilians laid a formal complaint against Machewel for thus allowing his monkey to usurp the high honours of a judicial functionary, and only consented to receive an apology on the conditions that Jacko should be put to death, and Tom Machewel sent up to join his regiment.

These terms were complied with. Had they not been consented to, Machewel (*père*) might have got into a sad scrape.

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TOO NEAR TO BE PLEASANT.

THE Sunderbunds may be justly styled the wilderness of India. No human hand has ever endeavoured to recover the jungle-covered land from its primitive wildness, overgrown with closely-tangled brushwood. Its swampy soil is reckoned so unhealthy that few wretches, however poor, have as yet been found hardy enough to settle there. Through this district, however, the military officer is sometimes compelled to pass, to arrive at the head quarters of his regiment. Such was the fate of Arthur Mactavish, who related to me the following adventure which there befell him.

Mac, having grown dreadfully weary of his long confinement on board the little boat in which he was slowly voyaging through the Sunderbunds, determined on landing near the first spot which should present to his eye the agreeable view of a human habitation. Aware that the whole country around him was swarming with ferocious wild animals, he wisely refrained from going on shore on many of the beautiful, but solitary spots by which he passed. At length he came to a little knot of Indian hovels, which stood some half a mile from the banks. Arthur here desired his head *dandy* (boatman) to *luggao* (the act of fastening the boat to the shore), and, instantly shouldering his Manton, started for the native village. On his approach being perceived a couple of Indians, divested of every strip of clothes except their small *lungouties* (the very smallest rag which decency requires), hastened to meet him, and warn him

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of the many pitfalls around him. From these men he learnt that their only occupation was that of digging holes, resembling human graves, about eight feet deep, which they covered with small branches of trees and brushwood. By these means they ensnared the wild animals, which, unconscious of the trap thus artfully set, would often tread on the seemingly firm ground, and in the next instant find themselves prisoners at the mercy of their captors, who instantly despatched them, selling the skins, and claiming from the authorities the price set upon every tiger's head. Of these animals they had captured above twenty during the preceding twelve months. Two of their party, it is true, had been destroyed by these ferocious beasts; but as the natives considered that it must have been their *nusseed* (pre-ordained fate), they appeared little affected by the circumstance. It was now late in the day, so, desiring them to go and fetch his sleeping mats, he determined on remaining in one of these huts for the night, as they promised him, in this case, that at break of day they would point out some splendid sport to him. To obtain what they described he would willingly have gone half round the world; so he unhesitatingly accepted their offer, and determined on passing the night there.

After partaking of some rice and ghee, having cleaned his gun (one barrel of which he always charged with ball, the other with shot), and arranged his ammunition and shooting apparatus for the following morning (in places where we have few companions to divert us this is half the sport), he laid himself down to rest; taking care, however, to bar the door as well as he could, for he rather

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disliked the manner of one of the villagers, and already began to repent that he had thus left himself so completely in their power. His servants, whom he now regretted not having brought with him, were full half a mile off. The few natives around him were strong, athletic men, accustomed to struggle with wild beasts, and almost as ferocious in their natures as the animals they were in the habit of hunting. At liberty to change from spot to spot, enabled in the fastnesses of the Sunderbunds to elude the most diligent search, proverbially avaricious, thinking little of the sacrifice of life, why should not these men fall on him and murder him? He had foolishly displayed his purse to them filled with rupees, and had vaunted the goodness of his gun, an object to them more precious than gold itself. What, then, was to prevent their making themselves masters of all these? Nothing. He felt this, and, revolving it in his mind, fell into a light, uneasy slumber.

It must have been about one o'clock in the morning when he was awakened by hearing several voices conversing in suppressed tones close to the little window of the hut, which was ill blocked up by a *cuscus tattie* (a blind or shutter made of dried grass). Mactavish stealthily crept towards it, and, to his utter consternation, heard them thus explain their bloodthirsty intentions.

"How long," demanded a strange voice, "is it since you got him in?"

"Just before nightfall."

"Have you since listened to ascertain if he is stirring?"

"I have, and suspect he is fast asleep."

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"Then this is the best time to fall on him; but, as you say he is powerful, we had better go prudently to work. How do you propose to attack him?"

"I think," replied one of his entertainers, "the best way will be to fire at him through the crevices with poisoned arrows."

"But suppose he bursts forth?"

"Oh! then we 'll despatch him with our knives."

"Have you got them with you?"

"Not yet."

"Well, then, be quick," said the apparent leader; "be off and fetch them, and we 'll get the job over as soon as possible. I 'll return in five minutes;" and Mactavish heard them suddenly go off in different directions.

With a panting heart Mac listened as their footsteps died away; then, seizing his gun, he determined to endeavour to escape, or, at all events, to sell his life as dearly as possible in the open air, whence the report of his fowling-piece might be heard by those on board his budgerow. In another instant he was out of the door, and with the speed of lightning he started off in the direction (at least, so he supposed) of the place of anchorage, where his boat was lying.

The moon was brightly shining as poor Arthur rushed along, heedless of any danger but that of being followed by the inhospitable murderers amongst whom he had thus unluckily fallen.

The cries of the jackal and the fayho, the roar of the larger animals, and the screams of wild birds suddenly disturbed from their roosting places, lent additional horrors to the scene as Arthur flew madly along. Presently a

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sudden bound was perceptible amongst the jungle. The crackling underwood was heard to yield beneath the pressure of some weighty beast of prey. A savage growl, accompanied with a peculiar cat-like, hissing noise, a pair of flashing eyes gleaming brightly even through the darkness, at once told the unfortunate fugitive that a tiger was springing after him. Poor Mactavish gave himself up as lost. For about twenty yards he kept ahead of his fearful pursuer. Another bound, however, would place him in his power; he had no time even to offer up a prayer. He gave one spring in despairing energy, and, as he did so, he felt a violent shock; bright sparks of fire appeared to flash from his eyes; every joint seemed dislocated. Arthur had fallen into one of the pitfalls, over which, as he fell, the tiger leaped safely.

Relieved for the moment from his fears, Mactavish now ventured to look up. By the light of the moon, which shone brightly, he perceived the tiger crouching down at the edge of the pit, watching with savage wakefulness the wretched being he evidently seemed to think now within his power. His glaring eyes were steadily fixed on his victim, who crouched down as low as possible to be out of the reach of the monster's destructive paw.

As Mactavish's eyesight began to get accustomed to the place he perceived, to his horror, a long black snake attempting to crawl up the sides. Foiled in this the serpent seemed to hesitate whether he would renew his endeavours to escape, or turn upon the intruder, who now sat trembling before him. At last it seemed to determine on the latter; for it suddenly began to rear itself, and fixing its eyes, which seemed to be

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of fire, upon poor Mac, prepared to spring. Arthur started up. As he did so he suddenly felt the flesh torn from his shoulder, which he had unthinkingly exposed to the claws of the tiger by raising himself within reach of his outstretched limb. The animal, in making the movement, had disturbed the branches at the edge of the trap; the gun had dropped through, and now fell into the pit at the feet of Mactavish; he, bleeding and in agony, had yet sufficient presence of mind to catch it up, and, instantly discharging it, destroyed the serpent as it kept moving about preparatory to its final dart. The report seemed to render the tiger more ferocious: the beast now attempted to creep down into the trap. Poor Arthur began seriously to consider whether it were not better to yield himself at once to the jaws of the animal than remain to die a lingering death by starvation in this living grave. His head reeled; desperation seemed almost about to drive him to madness. Well he knew that the snake's mate would probably ere long return to its consort. Already the earth began to crumble down under the scraping paws of the impatient tiger. Human nature could last out little longer, when suddenly a dying roar is heard; the savage animal turns over in the agonies of death, transfixed by several poisoned arrows! In another moment poor Mactavish's late host and his friends appear, and lift him out of the pit. They shout with joy at again seeing him safe. They welcome him, and express their delight at saving him. What, then, could their previous conduct mean? The mystery was soon cleared up. As they conducted Arthur back to his budgerow they explained to him that they had been engaged in destroying a leopard which had fallen into one of

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their pitfalls, and about which they were conversing when he overheard them. They were returning from this expedition when they heard the report of his gun, and, rushing to the spot whence the sound had proceeded, had happily succeeded, as I have related, in saving him, and restoring him to the service, in which he has since risen to high rank and honours.

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A TALE OF WRITER'S BUILDINGS.

We had drunk deeply; Writer's Buildings re-echoed with our shouts of mirth; eleven o'clock sounded, but not a word of parting had yet been pronounced. The *loll shrob* (claret) was excellent, the guests amusing. Unlike orgies of a similar description in Europe, not an argument had arisen to dim the bright hilarity of the evening. A feeling of brotherhood exists amongst Englishmen in India, arising from the distance of their common home, that joins them in closer ties of friendship than those we enter into elsewhere, more particularly if you are "in the service." In our country a man may be in the army, navy, church, or law, and yet not feel that every one in his profession is consequently his intimate friend. In India, however, those who, as I said before, are "in the service," consider themselves as members of a fraternity which binds them together by links of the strongest friendship. It is true the civilian is apt to think himself a much greater man than the soldier; yet, as this feeling is principally displayed by opening his house and entertaining his less rich fellow labourers, the military man has little to grumble at, and consequently partakes of the sumptuous fare afforded him without murmur, as I did on the evening I have selected for this sketch.

Jack Thornton had lately arrived. He was the son of a director, and, perhaps, assumed a few airs and graces in consequence, which were willingly admitted; for in Bengal we

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look upon the lords of Leadenhall as something exceeding the Emperor of Russia in power, in riches beyond Crœsus, and (I must in common gratitude add) in kindness unequalled by any other rulers in the world. To come back, however, to my story.

The conversation had turned upon ghosts. Some boldly admitted their belief in such appearances; others half doubted; while the third and most numerous portion of the company loudly ridiculed the idea as being impossible, offering to undergo all kinds of tests in order to prove their scepticism. At the head of this party was young Thornton.

"It is really too ridiculous to talk of such things in the nineteenth century," cried he. "Ghosts, indeed! I should like to see one."

"So should I," chimed in Gravestock; "nothing would give me so much pleasure."

"Here 's a health to all ghosts and goblins!" laughingly shouted Tom Baghott, a young cavalry officer; and the toast was drunk with great merriment.

"As an amendment I vote that we go and drink it in the churchyard," said Thornton; "they 'll hear us better there."

"Really I fear, my dear sir, you are going a little too far," said Mr. Martin, the clergyman of St. John's. "Like yourself, I am no believer in such appearances as you describe; but I must confess that I am wholly opposed to such indecorous proceedings as those you propose. Invocations of the kind might, indeed, summon with anger the dead from their graves."

"Twaddle!" interrupted Gravestock.

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"Egad! if they're to be had out of their very resting-places," said Thornton, "we 'll have 'em. Here goes!" said he, and, assuming a very serious air and manner, in despite of the opposition of the clergyman, he pronounced in a solemn voice, "By all the powers of necromancy, past, present, and future—by every incantation, holy and unholy—by every adjuration, I hereby, if such a thing be possible, call upon the dead to appear!"

Baghott, who had left the room for a single instant, hearing this pompous conjuration, suddenly burst into the room with a loud "Bah!"

The effect was so sudden, so unexpected, that Thornton uttered a loud scream and sprang from his chair. In an instant the general laugh recalled him to himself, when, smarting under the quiz (which, being unanimously kept up at his expense, he wisely refrained from resenting) he re-seated himself, determined, however, not only to be quits with Master Tom on a future occasion, but also to redeem his character from the braggadocio hue which now slightly tinged it. After much laughing, after a hundred other topics had been in turn discussed, Thornton suddenly turned round, and abruptly adverted to the conversation which had already caused him so much pain:—

"Gentlemen, I was taken by surprise just now; I was startled, I acknowledge, and overcome by sudden fear; but, as you have had your laugh at me, it is but fair, in my turn, I should have my revenge on some of you. I require but a slight one. A thousand rupees will compensate for the little affront that has been put upon me. Now, gents, who will bet me a thousand rupees that I do not go through any ordeal

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with respect to ghosts and goblins that may be assigned to me?"

"I will," replied the president; for he wished sincerely to make up for his apparent rudeness in having joined the laugh at Thornton's expense, even though he felt he should lose his money.

"Done!"

"Done!"

"Now, then, what am I to do?"

"It is nearly twelve o'clock. You shall go to the churchyard of St. John's, which is close by, and pick up a skull I saw lying there to-day near old Halliday's tomb, and, with a hammer and nail, which you can take with you, fasten the said skull to the wooden monument temporarily erected over the grave of poor Martin, then come back, and finish the evening here. I think I have let him off lightly," added the president in a whisper to his next neighbour.

"I only bargain for one thing; namely, that no practical jokes are played off on me. To insure this, promise me that no one stirs from this table till I return. I, on the other hand, am willing, on my return, to pledge my honour that I have accomplished the task, or pay the bet. You must, however, allow me two hours to perform it, as I must take the opportunity when the watch is off his beat."

These terms were agreed to, the required assurances given, and Thornton started off to his house to prepare himself for his undertaking, leaving the revellers to enjoy themselves till his return.

Once more at home Thornton sent out a scout to see that the coast was clear; then changing his dress, and donning a

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large military cloak, he armed himself with a hammer and nail, and started off for St. John's churchyard. The night was one of those beautiful specimens of oriental climates which in some degree compensate for the violent heat of the day. The heavens presented an expanse of the very darkest blue, thickly studded with stars. No moon was visible; but the lesser luminaries gave sufficient light to distinguish imperfectly objects in the immediate neighbourhood. A gentle breeze fanned the earth, slightly sighing as it passed through the ornamental buildings of the city.

Arrived at his destination without meeting with a single living being, Thornton boldly entered the churchyard, steadily resolved to accomplish the feat that had been proposed to him. It is true he felt a slight fluttering around the region of the heart, for which he could not account: also a continual desire to swallow his saliva, which, though generally admitted to be an indication of fear or strong emotion, could scarcely be so in the present instance, for the youth never stepped more firmly than when he entered the place of Christian sepulture.

Without much difficulty he found the skull, but, as he picked it up, he could not help thinking he heard some one pronounce his name. As he raised himself a shadow appeared to flit by him. Could he be deceived by his senses? Could the dead thus rise to reproach him? Well he knew, after the pledge that he had received, that none of his companions could have followed him. The man he had sent as scout had too well examined the place to believe that any one could lurk there. Whence, then, the sound which he had heard, as it were, close to his ear?

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Already he began to feel that he was wrong in thus desecrating the remains of mortality. For a moment he hesitated whether he should not return and give up the bet. The money was no object, but the tauntings which would attend such a result he could not bear; so, in spite of everything, he determined to complete his task.

He now strode across the burial-ground. He suddenly felt a jerk. He started, and uttered a low ejaculation. He looked round; it was merely his cloak, that had caught the corner of a tombstone. He hastily snatched it away and proceeded. Presently he felt a blow on his leg. For a moment he was startled. In the next he smiled, as he perceived it was only against a prostrate iron rail that he had hit it. On coming close to Martin's place of rest he stepped on some new earth, and sank ankle deep into it. It was the new grave of a friend, a fellow-passenger, who had been interred that morning. He felt shocked; yet, determined on accomplishing his enterprise, he at length laid his hand on the wooden tablet, which, till the marble one should be completed, covered the remains of poor Martin, his brother writer, his late chum.

As he knelt down beside the monument, which consisted of a flat piece of board, resting on four brick walls, about eighteen inches from the ground, he felt more inclined to pray for the repose of his friend's soul than thus to dishonour the covering to his ashes by an irreverent act. Again, however, the idea of the ridicule to which he would be exposed shot across his mind, and he set about his task, being determined to do it as quietly as possible.

Having placed the skull upon the tablet, he was pulling

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his hammer from his pocket, when, in turning, his hat was suddenly knocked off. He rose, and, with the boldness often inspired by fear, looked around him. No one was near. He had most likely struck it against something, and so caused it to fall off. In groping around he grasped a human bone, which he threw away with a shudder. Again he felt about, and his hand touched a cold, slimy frog: its icy, clammy chill reminded him of death. He determined to finish his labour before he again sought his hat, so down he knelt, and earnestly commenced his task. With extreme agitation he began to fasten the skull to the tomb. As the nail ground through the bone he fancied some one or other twitched him from behind; but, determined that nothing should now deter him, he gave one more stroke, and the dead man's head was firmly affixed to the monument of his friend.

He was about to rise, when he felt himself held down by the back of his neck. Here there could be no mistake. "Who is there?" loudly demanded Thornton. "By heaven! if you don't let me go I'll strike you dead with this hammer!" No answer was given, and Thornton began to feel extremely agitated. "Who's there, I say? I'll not consider this a joke. Scoundrel, let me get up!" And he strove to rise, but in vain; the same firm grasp held him by the nape of the neck. His horror now almost amounted to madness, for, by stretching out his leg, he had clearly ascertained that no one was behind him. "Living or dead, you shall not conquer me!" added he, in a paroxysm of fear and desperation; "you shall not hold me!" and he

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attempted suddenly to spring up. In the next instant he was dashed down upon his face perfectly insensible.

In the meantime the two hours demanded by the adventurous bettor had expired, and some of the party at the Writer's Buildings proposed to go and look after Thornton, and claim the bet, which was now clearly won. Supposing that his courage had failed him, and that he had quietly sneaked home to avoid the sneers of the company, it was proposed they should one and all go to the young man's house, and have their laugh out at his expense.

The proposal was warmly approved of, and they sallied forth; but, alas! the bird was flown. From the servant's account he had evidently gone forth to accomplish the task he had undertaken; so to the burying-place they joyously trudged. The gate was open; Thornton was evidently there. They shouted to him; no reply was given, so in they marched. Presently they came to Martin's grave, beside which lay their friend, perfectly motionless. In an instant the drunken party became sobered, and they felt too late that they had engaged in an affair likely to terminate in a disagreeable manner, and reproached themselves with having seriously frightened a good comrade and a valued friend. Those who were nearest immediately stepped forward to raise poor Thornton up. He was cold and insensible. A doctor, who was of the party, advanced; he looked alarmed, felt the pulse, put his hand upon the breast, then turning round, exclaimed, in a voice which struck terror into every heart around him, "*He is dead—quite dead!*"

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The friends who supported him hoped he was deceived, and attempted to remove the body. It was attached to the tomb. In an instant the whole cause of his terror and death was apparent. His cloak had slipped in between the skull and the tablet—he had firmly nailed it to the monument, so that when he had endeavoured, poor fellow! to rise, he had been held down by the back of the collar, and, striving with a jerk to free himself, had been naturally thrown down by it. The matter was hushed up. To this day the friends of the unhappy youth know not the cause of his death. From that moment none of the company have ever indulged in a practical joke. A brave, good, and virtuous youth was thus immolated in attempting to prove his courage, where no such test was required.

Let his example serve as a beacon to the foolhardy.

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THE COUP DE SOLEIL.

THERE is nothing in the world more thoroughly tedious and annoying than having the charge of a treasure party; yet he who enters the Company's service, and is unlucky enough not to have been appointed a staff-officer, is tolerably sure of having to escort specie from place to place during some eight months in every year. Without an English person to speak to, sleeping nightly under canvas, obliged to start every morning at about three o'clock to avoid the heat of the day, the wretched subaltern is forced to trudge some twelve miles per diem through ugly jungles and sandy plains, during more than half the time he continues to be a lieutenant.

I was myself an officer of this rank when I was in India, consequently I often partook of the above unpleasant duty. One evening when thus employed I had caused my tent to be erected near Augherdeep, and had already ordered my *bobachee* to cook my dinner, when a party of natives from the neighbouring bazaar called me from my tent. To my no small surprise I found they acted as an escort to a young European, who had evidently committed some heinous crime, as they had tightly and strongly bound him with cords. To the unhappy prisoner I turned for an explanation, but his manner was so incoherent, so violent, that I could learn but little from him, and I sought the solution of the mystery from a quiet, respectable Baboo, who appeared to be the chief of the party.

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"The unhappy gentleman," said the old man, "while sleeping on the deck of his boat, which is fastened to the shore a little below our village, was struck by a *coup de soleil*, and instantly went raving mad. His servants, who appear much attached to him, put him on shore, and have placed him under our care, with strict orders to prevent him injuring any one, as they were afraid to keep him on board."

The officer, who by this time seemed partly to have recovered his senses, asked in a tone of suppressed passion, "What do the rascals say?"

"Don't you speak Hindostanee?"

"Not a word, not a word, or they dare not treat me thus; but, by all that is sacred, I 'll trounce them yet for their conduct. In the meantime be good enough to order them to take off these cursed cords, and then tell me what they say."

He was instantly released, and I began to explain what the Baboo had told me. Before it was half done he started off in a paroxysm so violent that the men again attempted to put on the cords, when, before I could interfere, the furious young man had knocked down the old chief and three of his principal followers. I instantly directed two of my sepoys to advance, to whom the apparent madman quietly submitted himself.

"Oh, sir!" addressing himself to me, "oh, sir! it is all very well, if *you* choose to join these robbers, and take their part: they doubtlessly would have murdered me had you not come up: it is all very well. You have the might on your side, and consequently the right; but, as sure as I stand here, so sure will I report you, and ask for a court-martial on

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you as soon as I arrive at Berhampore, where my father commands."

I confess he startled me. General Gaskell, the commandant at Berhampore, was my oldest and my best friend and patron. I therefore motioned to the soldiers to stand back, and asked him whether he was in earnest in this assertion.

"Earnest, sir? Of course I am."

"You mean to say you are the boy I have so often nursed in my arms, and who is expected in India by the next fleet?"

"I am Tom Gaskell, if that is what you want to know; and, as I suppose I must submit to a regular cross-examination, I had, perhaps, better tell you who and what I am at once. I am a cadet going up to do duty with the Tenth Native Infantry. I came out by a single ship, instead of waiting for the winter fleet, and here is my commission as an ensign;" and he handed me the said document.

The black people around us seemed to be surprised at the prisoner's mildness, and I really began to feel that I had been rather hasty, and sought a still farther explanation from the young ensign, who now began to recover his good humour.

"Upon my life I cannot tell anything about it, except that yesterday I thrashed my crew and servants all round for having awoke me by their cursed noise at six in the morning, and that they soon afterwards told me the man who had gone on shore for provisions had returned, and said there was famous shooting near the village, upon which I landed; but no sooner did I get to the spot that they had pointed out than I was seized and carried to an infernal go-down, where I lay all last night, and was marched up and down all the morning

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through the native bazaar, while every one kept salaaming to me in mockery."

"You mistake; they meant to worship you. A maniac with them is a being worthy of adoration."

"But, my dear fellow, I 'm not a madman."

"Perhaps you were delirious for a short time after the stroke of the sun you received."

"Hang it!" cried Gaskell, again beginning to lose his patience, as the Baboo and his satellites jumped back; "hang it! how can you be so stupid? I tell you I never had one. It is all a falsehood from beginning to end."

For a moment I felt perplexed; then dismissing the native escort, I undertook to take charge of the supposed lunatic myself, taking care, however, to make this explanation in Hindostanee, for fear of hurting the young man's feelings, and then proposed to walk with him down to his boat. This we did; but on our arrival nothing of the kind was to be found. This puzzled us, and we were about to return, totally at a loss to unravel this strange mystery, when we were met by an official messenger, who came trotting on foot at a rate far beyond that at which these letter-bearers usually travel, who was making up for the house of the principal Baboo. When I stopped him, and asked what despatches he bore, he instantly delivered a packet to me, addressed, to my no small surprise, to my youthful companion, who seemed equally astonished at thus receiving a missive in his father's handwriting, more particularly since the general could scarcely have had time to hear of his arrival.

He anxiously read it, and then gave it to me. Its contents were as follow:—

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"DEAR TOM,—Thank heaven you are safe, though you scarcely deserve it. One of your runaway crew has just arrived here in breathless haste, to tell me that your passion has been so ungovernable that you have severely maimed several of your servants, and that, fearful of consequences, they have been forced to land you, and, through a well-invented deceit, have caused you to be detained as a madman in the house of the principal Baboo at Augherdeep. Though I affected anger at their thus deserting you, and apparently pardoned them with reluctance, yet I heartily rejoice at the good lesson they have given you, and feel grateful to them that they did not retaliate on you more severely. Always remember a man is a man, whether he be black or white, and that every native is protected by British laws. Drop these foolish passions and fancied ideas of superiority, and bear in mind that the most feeble, and those who appear most quietly to submit, are the most sure to repay an unkindness. I will myself be with you with a spare palanquin in an hour after you receive this. Till then God bless you and mend your temper.

"Your affectionate father,

"J. GASKELL."

My crest-fallen friend, the general, and myself, had a merry evening of it, though, I confess, wholly at the expense of the former, who has since become one of the best-tempered fellows and mildest masters in Bengal.

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FIRE AND WATER.

Our legislators have wisely drawn the widest distinction between murder and manslaughter, the plotted malice or fore-planning of crime being the real vice of the act. The mere deed of taking life is justifiable in many cases. The distinction between these two crimes is so nice as to be often mistaken; so Jerry Jackson was perfectly right in never relating the following story, of which I was a witness, and consequently, in the eye of the law, a *particeps criminis*.

Jerry and I were on our way down to Calcutta from Cawnpore, having received leave of absence for four months. We had left that station about six days, and had been amusing ourselves the whole morning shooting the ill-omened birds that hover over the river, and occasionally float down the stream, perched on the dead body of some deceased Hindoo; who, as all the world knows, is after death piously burnt by his sorrowing relatives, or thrown into the river to become the meal of the carnivorous prawn or the flesh-feeding birds, that never lack the most dainty fare in the Ganges; for he who travels on that stream will not fail to meet with twenty or thirty putrid corses floating on its rapid surface daily!

As I said before, we had been amusing ourselves trying to hit these despoilers of the dead with a rifle-ball, and, when tired of the sport, had entered the cabin to take our tiffin, leaving our guns loaded on the deck of the budgerow; which, by the by, is a far more comfortable boat than either the

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lord mayor's barge or the Rotterdam treckshuyt. Going up the stream a vessel of this kind will travel little more than fifteen miles in a day; coming down we often skimmed over three times that distance. At the moment I have selected for the opening of this sketch we were, however, floating about thirty yards from one side of the river, to avoid the strong current which runs in the centre at the rate of about five miles an hour. Our *dandies* (boatmen) were coolly swallowing their rice and ghee, allowing us to drift along, when we were suddenly alarmed by the distant but violent screams of a female. We instantly rushed out to discover the cause of these sounds, to which, however, our black servants appeared to lend no attention.

The group whence they proceeded was on the opposite shore, about two hundred yards off. We could distinctly see them. An old female was lying on a bedstead close to the edge of the water, tightly held down by two men, while a third male and a young girl were apparently pouring cold water in large quantities over the struggling woman.

Of course we supposed it some practical joke, and turned to our head dandy for an explanation.

"Make die old woman," answered he, without the slightest emotion.

For a moment Jerry thought the boatman misunderstood him, and he repeated the question: the same reply was given.

"What! do you mean to say they are murdering the woman?"

"No, sahib, no. Those old woman children make die mother."

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We stood astounded: puzzled: totally at a loss to comprehend the scene; considering it wholly impossible that children could thus publicly be murdering their own parent, or that such an act could thus be perpetrated in noonday, while a party like ours stood looking on with apathy. We therefore made further inquiries, and learnt the following facts.

The old woman having been given over by the doctors and priests, had been brought down by her family to the water's edge at the time when the tide was lowest, in order that, with the returning rise, the waters might carry her off, and the god of the stream receive her into everlasting life. The better to secure this, the more effectually to shorten her pains, those who had thus exposed her to what they considered certain death had stopped her nose and eyes with mud, leaving her mouth only open, that she might the better supplicate the river deity. But, alas! the best schemes sometimes fail, and this pious plan of insuring immortal bliss to a parent had miscarried. The tide by some accident had failed to carry her away, and the old woman was discovered by her affectionate children alive and kicking, just when they ought to have found her swallowed up by the god of the Ganges. This was a disgrace not to be borne. Not only was it a slur on the unhappy female whom the waters had refused to receive, but on her whole family; in fact, on the whole tribe. To evade this stigma her own children were now drowning her on the pallet where she lay; blessing her all the time they kept suffocating her with water.

"Good God!" cried Jackson, "this is downright murder. Cross directly to the spot."

"What for?" replied the dandy who steered. "It is

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probably too late to save her; and besides, sahib, why should you do so? Her fate is come."

"Not so; she may yet live many happy years," chimed in our friend Jamieson.

The native, who was really an intelligent man, with a smile of compassion at our total ignorance of Indian habits, instantly replied,—

"Happiness, sahib, is no more for that old woman. You save her life—what then? She is a Hindoo; she will be worse off than a dog; none will receive her; none will know her; her own children will fly from her. Cursed by all, she will wander a stranger, despised by all good men. She will envy the pariah dog that the Englishman shoots for pleasure; for she will know less kindred than the wild animal that forages amidst the carrion for his meal."

"Never mind that," cried I; "cross the stream. She shall at least have the choice of life."

"The river runs too fast—to go over is impossible."

Jerry Jackson joined in the general murmur we set up, and the menaces with which we threatened our crew if they did not instantly make the attempt we desired.

An Indian is silent, sullen, and submissive when opposed. We could get no answer. The boat steadily glided on.

We now began to shout; but all seemed equally futile, for the wretches went on in their work of murder, heedless of our cries, or the prayers of the poor doomed creature. We saw her once struggle so fiercely against death that she rolled off the pallet. The man and woman again lifted her on it, and held her tightly down, while a third approached her with a pot of water. She screamed; he applied it to her

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mouth ; we could distinctly hear her almost unearthly screech ; he put it to her lips, and thus began to stifle her.

Jerry Jackson could bear no more. He seized his rifle, and in a minute the proposed murderer rolled over—whether dead or not I have never heard to this hour. We hurried on, fearful of the consequences. If that shot was mortal, say, reader, was Jackson a murderer or a justified avenger?

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RUNNING A-MUCK.

One of the greatest objections to India is the almost certainty of every young man forming one of those *liaisons* which are not only dangerous in a moral point of view, but often destructive in our worldly career. Encouraged by example, shut out from the more refined society of European ladies, without a hope of marrying, and unchecked by the laws of society, the young soldier or civilian in India, stationed in some dreary spot, removed from the awe which the presence of virtuous females inspires, is apt to form a connection as revolting to European taste as opposed to every moral precept.

Mr. A—— was unmarried, young, and handsome; he had won and carried off a lovely girl of sixteen; that is to say, if loveliness can be imagined with a dark skin. He had lived with her about three years, and had by her two children, whom he in after-life acknowledged and cherished. In him the act was wrong; in her it was excusable, since the form of marriage, the mere thought of such a thing, had never entered her head; her very parents were proud of the honour done her; her rude ignorance blotted out the blame that would otherwise have attached to her; while the only excuse he could offer for the seduction of a mere child was the force of example—the custom of the country.

Ayah (so will I call her) was in the bath with her two little babes, amused with their infantine screams, as they nestled

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"RUNNING A-MUCK."

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closer to her bosom and shunned the water she occasionally immersed them in. Her brother held a post in the house; her sister was her companion; her father filled the situation of porter at the outer lodge-gate.

The first of these was a religious enthusiast; he had been wrought on by certain Brahmins; he had committed many faults; he determined at once to expiate them. One way only is thought by the pious Malay to lead straight to heaven, and on this he resolved; he offered up his prayers performed his ablutions, and prepared to run a-muck.

The fanatic who thus determines, first vows to his god to destroy every living thing he may meet on his path, to spare neither sex nor relationship, to turn neither to the right nor the left, but to sacrifice all indiscriminately, till he himself in turn be sacrificed. He first proceeds to oil his body all over to elude capture as long as possible (for the more victims he makes, the more certain is his road to heaven); he casts off everything that may be caught at, shaves his head lest he should be seized by the hair, takes a large potion of opium or some other maddening poison, then, arming himself with a knife or creese in each hand, he rushes forth to immolate all he may encounter.

Ayah was leaving the bathing-room with her children in her arms; her sister and her attendants were following her, laughing and playing with her little babes. A more innocent, a more happy group, could not have been found. They were already in the passage, when a sudden noise made the young mother turn round; in another instant she fell a corpse, struck down by her own brother—that brother she had loved so tenderly. A single blow had nearly severed her head from

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her body, and as she fell the blood gushed over the unconscious little ones that fondled in her bleeding breast. Screams burst from all, as the madman bounded away triumphing in the act. He fled along the passage; an old bearer met him; in less than time for thought his head was nearly split in two, and his grey beard deluged in blood. The surviving sister rushed after him to stay him in his wild career; he repulsed her—turned to look at her for an instant; he hesitated—he doubtless repented. No, he paused but to make his aim more sure; the creese he carried in his left hand was buried in her breast; he smiled like an exulting demon, and rushed on. The alarm was given; a general pursuit took place, but without effect; the porter was called to close the gates; he came out and saw his infuriated son; he read his purpose; he hesitated for a moment, and, as the parricide sprang towards him, the father stepped back and discharged the contents of his musket into the heart of his child, who, quivering, fell, still grinning in diabolical agony: he died at the foot of him who gave him birth, impotently attempting still to strike those who dared not approach to succour him.

One of the two bereaved children, fostered by the generous woman who afterwards married their father, died in action, a major in the British army; the other was for a short period the beauty of Dublin; but unfortunately, after a masquerade at Lady B——'s, where she had gone dressed as a sultana, she imprudently washed her face with cold water, and a few hours afterwards was a corpse. She was generally mourned; but none more beautifully expressed his grief on this melancholy occasion than the unfortunate Lord Kilwarden, who

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was murdered only a few months afterwards. His lines may yet be remembered by many, though I only recollect the following portion of them:—

"Immortal A——, at whose great name
The flippant deist feels the blush of shame!
Could not the worth of that illustrious line,
Which from his pen bore evidence divine—
Could not each virtue, mingled with each grace,
Which from thy heavenly soul illumed thy face—
Could not thy youth, thy budding goodness save
The lovely victim from an early grave?

* * * *
* * * *

God saw the blossom of celestial root,
And to its native heaven consigned the fruit!"

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A FACSIMILE.

I HAD landed at Agra and seen the wonderful Targe (I always spell Hindostanee as it is pronounced), with its splendid pillars inlaid with precious stones; though some persons profess to be sceptical on this subject, and boldly assert that the original rubies and emeralds have long since made place for coloured glass. I had visited the old man who has for twenty years lived, according to his son's account, inside the great gun which lies upon the beach. I had seen some of the wonderful tricks of a famous juggler who was exhibiting in this far-famed city. At length, tired of lionising, I walked out to pay my respects to Mr. L——, the government resident, one of the mildest and most gentlemanly men in British India.

What, then, must have been my surprise, as I walked up the principal staircase of his house, to hear a sudden scream of terror, and in the next moment to find a wretch fly past me with a fleetness which a sharp kick alone could have imparted to his motions; for the fugitive was evidently a Chinese (or, as we call him in Bengal, a Chinaman), one of a race who never hurry their movements save by compulsion. Looking up I perceived L—— rush out after him, uttering a volley of the most violent execrations.

On seeing me my usually quiet friend suddenly stopped, ashamed at being thus caught in this most undignified situation. I confess I could not help smiling.

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"Holloa, Charley, what puts you in such a rage? and whence comes the Chinaman? I did not know you had any of their race in these parts."

"Confound them all!" replied the irritated civilian, trying to check his passion. "He comes from Calcutta, and be hanged to him!"

"Who is he? What is he?"

"A painter—the rascal paints miniatures. I really have to apologise for this fit of passion; but ——" And he paused for a moment.

"I suppose you had some just cause for it," said I. He hesitated. "Come, tell me what it is all about."

L—— reddened up as if ashamed. "Upon my life I believe I was wrong; but at the moment I could not help it. But, after all, it was a very foolish affair."

"Come, then, let me have it." So while we were eating our *tiffin* and smoking a *chillum* he related to me the following facts.

It appeared that the unhappy Chinese had travelled up from Calcutta on speculation as a miniature painter, and, when unsuccessful in this profession, had occasionally recurred to the never-failing resource of a Chinaman, the noble trades of shoemaking and tailoring; for by these two arts, sewing and painting, every son of China in Bengal manages to live.

Tempted by his assurances of skill L—— had desired him to take his portrait, well knowing that at least he might count on his candour and accuracy; since he had often heard the story of the Englishman, who, sending his coat as a model to a Chinese tailor in Calcutta without mentioning

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that the old habit had a patch in it, had the new coat sent home so thoroughly made in imitation of the pattern, that not only was it exactly the same size and form, but the same patch appeared upon it, the new vestment having had the piece carefully cut out and sewed in precisely similar to the old one. But to return.

The artist went to work, and traced the lineaments of my friend; who, by the by, was as yellow as the effigy of our gracious sovereign on a guinea, and was awfully pitted with the small pox. He first drew the pencil sketch and showed it to L——, who was greatly pleased with it, since he considered it a flattering likeness; and that was what he particularly wanted, as he intended to send it down to Calcutta to a young lady on whom he had matrimonial designs. The painter, proud of his approbation, now began the colouring, and for some time went on well, both parties being highly pleased.

On the second day, however, he produced a pair of compasses, which he almost every instant applied to the face of Charley, and as often to the portrait before him, which L—— had agreed not to look at again till it was finished. The artist seemed well pleased with the work, and more careful and minute than ever. At length the touches of the compass became so frequent that the civilian could not help asking the painter to what use he applied them. After reiterating the question once or twice the Chinaman turned round, and with a look of triumphant knowledge replied,—

"I tell you, massa, I tell you; me measure little holes in massa's face, to put 'em in picture, massa."

"Great heaven!" exclaimed the enraged European, as

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he started up, and proceeded forthwith to expel the Chinese, appearing almost to consider him as a football. The Chinaman was never again seen in Agra, and for a very excellent reason I believe. My friend sent him money to be off as quickly as he could, and never to publish the story. He forgot, however, to include me in the promise.

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EXPECTATIONS.

I was sent out to India in order to check my extravagant habits, and for the sake of restoring me to the good graces of an old great uncle, whom I had offended by some acts which really had been so grossly exaggerated and mis-stated to him that no wonder the old gentleman had scratched me out of his will. From him I expected one hundred thousand pounds. My uncle's maxim had ever been, "Do whatever you will, but always show courage." Now it so happened that on the eve of a duel I had gone to a mess-party and had got tipsy, and, returning in that state to my own lodgings, I had been taken up, lodged in a watch-house, and during my insensibility and forced detention had been posted a coward. This statement had been repeated to my peppery old uncle in false colours. He erased my name from his will, and I was sent out to regain his favour by a proper and manly appeal, carrying with me the subsequent apology made to me by my adversary after exchanging three shots.

My next best expectations were from my grandmother, who possessed sixty thousand pounds, and promised to leave it all to me, provided I never wilfully deviated from truth. She absolutely idolised me, and made me promise to write to her by every ship.

My father's first cousin, a widowed dame, was extremely pompous, and fancied she conferred an honour on every one she noticed. She possessed thirty thousand pounds, which,

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when I left England, she had willed unconditionally to me.

And lastly, my poor father, a good, worthy old soul, who had been, at the period I refer to, a widower thirty-eight years. He was staid, starch, and unbending to all save me. He hated the very name of marriage, loved his club, and played a good rubber of whist. He had often offered to settle everything he had (an estate of two thousand pounds a year) on me, which I had as constantly refused, notwithstanding his reiterated wishes to this effect.

Now let us see the result of expectations amounting to one hundred and ninety thousand pounds, and an estate of the foregoing amount.

On my arrival in Calcutta I found a letter from my uncle, who was in a dying state at Moorshedabad. I hastened up. He was still alive, and I was allowed to see him. He was delighted to see me, kissed me, fondled me, assured me he had learnt the true state of the case, and was sorry for having disinherited me, but thanked Heaven it was not yet too late. His lawyer had been waiting my arrival to alter his will.

"So now, my dear George," cried he, "call him in, and let me repair this injustice."

The physician on the other side of the bed beckoned me aside. We retired to a far corner of the room. The doctor spoke.

"You love your uncle?"

"Sincerely."

"Would you cause his instant death, or allow him to live, which he may yet do, several days?"

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I was surprised, indignant at the question.

"Well, then, don't allow him to exert himself just now; the excitement of altering his will will kill him. Give him this anodyne, let him rest after it, and with recovered forces he will be able to go through the task I so anxiously desire to see him perform."

I assented, though my uncle rather opposed my wish, and gave him the opiate. We then retired from the room, leaving the good physician to watch by him.

We sat in anxious vigil in the antechamber. The lawyer mended and re-mended his pens. I confess I fidgeted. The distant relations, and those who expected small legacies, offered me every attention.

At last a footstep approached; our voices were instantly hushed. The attorney gathered up his writing materials. I rose as the doctor entered.

"Alas!" said the medical practitioner, "our friend has breathed his last."

My first breath after this announcement was a curse on my own folly. The doctor proved to be my uncle's sole heir.

"I am a soldier of fortune now," cried I; so I immediately joined my regiment up the country, and regularly wrote to my good matter-of-fact grandmamma. Desirous of amusing her, I sent her an account of our military movements, and, amongst other facts, mentioned that we nightly encamped in the *topes* (clumps) of mango trees, which abound in these parts. Now it so happened that a drop of salt water, an accidental erasure by friction, the seal torn off, or some such accident, had carried away the

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letter *e*; so, to my no small horror, by return of post I received a severe lecture from my grandmamma on the superiority of truth, as compared to the horrors of falsehood, with the pithy but annoying wind-up, "that she (*i. e.*, granny) was sorry to see I still persevered in my habits of romancing; that I evidently tried, living in a foreign country, to deceive those I ought to love and cherish. In fact," she said in conclusion, "though I believe that a poor deserted traveller might by accident seek shelter from the wild beasts you describe by climbing up one of these trees, and even pass a night in so dangerous an elevation, yet that a whole regiment should perch themselves in such a situation as the *tops* of mango trees I never, never will believe. Fie, fie! thus to attempt to play on the credulity of one who has loved you as I have done."

By the same packet I received the account of the old lady's death, and the foundation of a Methodist chapel, endowed with all she had possessed.

It was while I was yet in mourning for this mistaken relative that I received a note from my lady cousin, requesting to know whether, in an invitation she had sent to a half-sister of mine some years before, she had invited her to a party by requesting the "honour of her company," or whether she had desired her "to oblige" her by her presence. I was busy when the communication arrived, and hastily sat down and replied that, to the best of my recollection, the invitation had been coldly worded, and "that there was neither honour nor obligation in it." By this answer I intended to please my relative. In her will

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a few months afterwards she stated "that, as it appeared there was neither *honour* nor *obligation* in her invitations, she conceived I might think the same of her legacies," so she left all her property, without reservation, to Miss Smirke, her dear companion and toady.

These disappointments made me determine to return and live on our family estate with my father, whom I had not heard from for some time; so I sold my traps, got leave, and was about to proceed to Europe, when I received the following laconic epistle from my father:—

"DEAR GEORGE,—I have been so lonely since you left that I am sure you will agree with me in thinking I have done the wisest thing possible in my situation. I have married a charming creature, a perfect angel, who adores me, and I intend to devote the remainder of my life to her happiness. I have sent your brother John to sea, and your sister Fanny, who has turned out very ungrateful and disobedient to my dearest wife, to live with a family as a nursery governess, so now I am quite happy, I may say blessed. Times are extremely hard, and rents badly paid, but I send you five pounds and your mother's blessings. After you have completed your twenty years' service, to entitle you to receive full pay for life, we shall be delighted to see you.

"Your affectionate father,

"JAMES SMITH."

"P.S.—Charlotte (my angel wife) has just blessed me with a beauteous babe."

This was a closer. I rejoined my regiment, and never

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heard from my worthy parent again, who soon afterwards died, leaving all to his dearest Charlotte, the present wife of a handsome pseudo-German baron.

As for me, I have lived to outlive all expectations, and consequently feel for the first time in my life happy and free.

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A FRIENDLY BET.

I was dining at Mr. ——'s, one of the best dinner-giving civilians in Calcutta. We had drunk a large portion of lal shrob, and were freely indulging in our hookahs, which bubbled under the table and behind our chairs. We had talked over all the local news, and had canvassed the affairs of Europe—in a word, we had gone through all the routine of an Indian dinner, which I can no better describe than by stating it to be a regular struggle to forget the misery of the climate—an attempt to overcome fatigue and ill-health by luxurious feasting. The ice, which I must confess is one of the best things in Bengal, had cooled our parched lips, Colonel T—— had made several matches for the next races, and all seemed well pleased save and except our entertainer, who was looking sad and gloomy. The cause of his present sullen mood was simply this.

A pseudo-wit, a young ensign just arrived from Europe, had been invited to ——'s table. Unused to the pomposity of rich civilians, and fancying he could jest before a "senior merchant," he had actually thought fit to commence a series of puns, with that easy familiarity in which witlings are sometimes pleased to indulge in Great Britain. The host fancied his dignity slighted by the overwhelming volubility of the young soldier; he therefore ventured to interfere, when, lo! his military tormentor turned upon him, and

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uttered half a dozen witticisms at the expense of the old civilian himself. Astounded at the impudence of the almost boy who thus dared to beard him, Mr. —— paused for an instant. The ensign took advantage of the silence, and demanded "why Mr. ——'s" (his host's) "coat was like a pine-apple in Hindostanee." None dared to answer, though all saw the point. "Do you give it up? Well, then, I'll tell you. Because it's on an ass!" (aunanass). Then, jumping up, he declared that he had an engagement to fulfil, and went off laughing at the ill-concealed wrath of his entertainer, whose interference he chose thus publicly to reprove.

Good humour was again, however, ascending her throne; even Mr. —— had begun to regain his wonted composure, when suddenly Mr. —— fell from his chair in a fit. Every one rose.

"What's the matter?" cried L——.

"Our host has been seized with apoplexy," cried Danvers.

"Not a bit. It's mere epilepsy," chimed in Martin.

"It's apoplexy, I tell you," tartly replied the first speaker.

"It's epilepsy, for a hundred gold mohurs."

"Done," shouted Danvers, "done for a hundred!"

"By heavens, he's dying!" exclaimed Atkins; "he's turning black in the face. He's dying; give him air!"

"Not he," said T——, the resident at ——.

"He is; he is even now in his death struggle."

"Pooh, pooh, he'll get over it. I'll bet a lac of rupees he recovers."

"Done, done!" vociferated Atkins.

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"What 's the matter?" demanded the young ensign, who had suddenly re-entered.

"Here 's our host in a fit — a dangerous fit," replied Captain Somers.

"Untie his neckcloth," suggested a medical man present; "untie his neckcloth—he is choking!"

"I bar that," shouted Atkins. "I 've bet a lac he dies. I insist that no one shall touch him."

"What! would you see a man die, and not try to avert it?"

"You 're really very wrong," cried T——, who had bet on our entertainer's recovery.

"Will you pay half-forfeit, and let the cravat be undone?"

"Not I," said the civilian.

"Then no man present shall touch him!" reiterated Atkins, putting himself in an attitude as if to keep assistance off.

"Well, then, let 's see what a boy, as you were pleased to call me just now, can do."

In another moment Atkins was sprawling on the earth, and the fainting man's neckcloth suddenly undone. In five minutes more he was perfectly recovered.

Atkins sent the ensign a challenge, which his regiment took up, and sent the said Atkins to Coventry. He not only lost his lac of rupees, but also his best friend; for our host, who had hitherto been his benefactor and patron, never forgave him, but transferred his friendship to the young ensign, who is now a lieutenant-colonel, thanks to his timely interference in preventing the probable catastrophe of this "*friendly bet.*"

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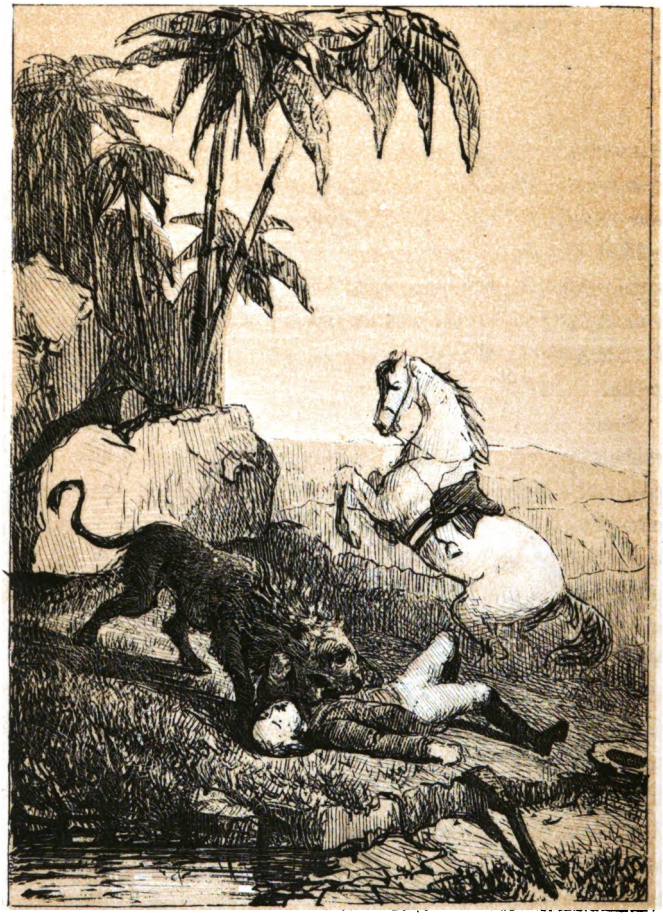

THE LIONESS.

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THE LIONESS.

LIEUTENANT CARLYSLE was one of the noblest, best, and most generous youths that ever sought the shores of India. He was exactly sixteen when he sailed from England, leaving behind him many true and sterling friends that his many virtues and amiable disposition had won for him. He was of a most sanguine temperament, and one of the handsomest lads I ever beheld. From infancy we had been brought up together.

Some ten years had elapsed when an apparent stranger rushed into my room, and, grasping me by the hand, began to pour out a thousand kind speeches of recognition. For a few moments I thought the gentleman had made a mistake, and was about to tell him so, when a peculiar smile for a single instant lighted up his countenance, and I immediately recognised it as that of my old, excellent friend, Perceval Carlysle. Yes, the emaciated, care-worn, and haggard being who now shook me cordially by the hand was no less than the dear companion of my boyhood. Occasionally, indeed, I could trace the speaking eye, the fine countenance of my early friend; but, alas! all signs of health and youth had fled. Ten short years had robbed Carlysle of all his bloom and much of his wonted high spirits. The fire of his eye and the joyous tone of happier days were gone. His good heart, his generous soul alone remained, alone were saved from the general wreck of his once buoyant mind and athletic body. At first I thought

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ill health, the warmth of eastern climes, or probably dissipation, had caused the havoc I beheld. Perceval, however, soon undeceived me. He saw my distress, he marked my horror, as I tried to recall his once handsome features, and, reading my thoughts, he exclaimed,—

"I see you are startled by my altered looks. I expected no less; but I thought, as I had sent you an account of my accident, you would have been better prepared to anticipate the change in my personal appearance."

"Accident! I never heard of any. I have received no letters from you these three years."

"Then my epistles have gone astray, that's all; but as they have done so I will tell you how the affair took place; that is to say, if you wish to hear it."

I expressed my desire to do so, and he repeated to me the following circumstances, which I give as nearly in his own language as possible.

"I was quartered high up the country, commanding a detachment, at least fifty miles from any other European. My only recreation was lion-hunting, which I occasionally indulged in, and succeeded in destroying several of these superb animals, which were here so numerous and so bold as often to approach our tents and carry off our provisions.

"I was thus amusing myself one morning, well mounted on a fleet Arab, followed by a dozen men on foot, and armed with an unerring rifle, when one of my people suddenly discovered the prints of a lion's paw in the sandy plain over which we were passing, apparently inclining towards a deep jungle some two hundred yards in advance of us. I instantly dismounted to examine the footmarks, and was carefully

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tracing them, when a sudden cry of terror made me look up. I did so, and beheld immediately in front of me a magnificent lioness, which had suddenly bounded out of the covert. Not a moment was to be lost. I sprang towards my horse. My *syce*, however, alarmed at the appearance of the queen of beasts, had quitted the rein, and before I could reach him the frightened animal was half across the open space. My servants had all fled. I was alone. The lioness was lashing her sides with her tail; she was evidently meditating an attack. I had but one resource left. After vainly calling on my servants to return and support me I levelled my rifle, and, just as she rushed forward, fired. For a single instant I was not quite sure whether I had hit her or not. She suddenly halted, threw up her head, and gave a terrific roar. I was now convinced she was wounded; but, alas! seemingly not in any mortal part. She glared on me. Human nature could stand no more. I threw down my gun, and, foolishly overcome by fear, I fled. In another second I was conscious of my error. I heard her come panting along close beside me. It was all over with me; I knew my fate was sealed. I threw myself down. The lioness actually, in her haste to overtake me, sprang over me. I heard a shot, and a piercing cry from the animal told me she was again hit, but I did not once dare to look up to see how seriously.

"After about half a minute I could not resist the temptation, the desire I felt to read my doom. I slightly turned my head, only the least in life, and beheld the lioness licking her paw, through which a ball had evidently passed; the blood was also flowing copiously from her jaw, where my discharge had in the first instance taken effect. She was

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sitting up on her haunches in evident agony. No sooner, however, did she perceive the very slight movement which I had made than she sprang up, and in the next moment I felt her teeth penetrate my back-bone, while one of her claws tore my left shoulder bare of flesh; in the next she lifted me off the ground and carried me forward. This, however, was evidently an effort to her. Her wounded jaws refused to meet; but still she held me, screaming, struggling, praying for death, tightly in her teeth, as she bore me on with the same ease with which she would have raised a kitten. I shouted to my servants to fire. It seems they feared to do so, lest by accident they might destroy me instead of the animal. Alas! little did they know my feelings at that moment. Instant death—a release from the excruciating tortures I was then suffering—would have been the greatest favour they could have conferred on me.

"Thus I was carried for about a hundred yards, when, overcome by pain, the lioness dropped me, and, lying down, began to lick the blood which streamed from my wounds. I could feel her rough tongue as it passed along the bitten parts and tore open the toothmarks. I could feel her warm breath as she placed her mouth to my lacerated shoulder. One gripe more, one single wound in my throat, to which she was close, and I knew all would be over. I even attempted to turn over to her to offer it to her jaws. She placed her paw on the bare bone of my shoulder and rolled me back, adding another, and, if possible, a more acute pang to my sufferings. Again she began to suck up my blood as I lay groaning beneath her.

"My servants, I supposed, rallied and alarmed her; for

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she suddenly once more started up, and, making her teeth meet in my left arm, began to drag me away. Great heavens! I feel even at this moment the same agony I then endured. In recalling the tortures of that instant I almost fancy I again experience the pain she caused me as she dragged me along, evidently bearing me towards her lair to feed her whelps. Suffering as I was I knew all this; I read my doom and shuddered at it. Twice did the flesh break away from my arm, and twice did she renew her savage hold on me, and that so powerfully that she succeeded in getting me inside the jungle. Here she paused, unable from pain to proceed further. Two or three shots were fired at her without success. At length, finding her situation perilous, and her prey likely to escape, she retired a few paces, and, determining on one more effort, raised herself, and, opening her huge jaws, suddenly bounded on me. I felt her teeth, but they closed not; I felt her whole weight on me, but she stirred not. In the next moment I heard a human voice. I was released from the ponderous load and lifted up—the lioness lay dead at my feet. She had expired in the very act of destroying me. She had ceased to exist as she made her last attack. She had died on me. I fainted. I was taken in a palanquin in a state of insensibility nearly three hundred miles. For two years I was an invalid. At last I was recommended to try the air of my native country. I returned to Europe, and here I am."

Poor fellow! he is now no more. Escaped from the perils of the East, he has found a grave in his native land. *Requiescat in pace!*

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ONE TOO MANY.

It is all very well to talk of native princes, and paint them, when speaking to those who know nothing about them, as great monarchs, armed with uncontrolled powers of life and death, possessed of revenues and jewels far beyond the most glittering hopes of Christian kings, surrounded by lovely nymphs, gorgeously attired ministers, and every luxury that can inflame the imagination. But their true position is little known, little cared for by the majority of our countrymen, or they would cease to envy the borrowed splendour of these potentates: they are, in truth, nothing more nor less than state prisoners, forbidden to issue a single edict, unable to stir from their palaces, without the permission of the British resident (a term meant to be synonymous with ambassador), who is placed by government at the court of each of these petty princes for the purpose of watching and keeping them in good order.

This officer is bound to see that the monarch's salary (for the nawab only receives a certain income from the East India Company, in lieu of his extensive revenues) is properly expended; that he meddles with no political affairs; that he confers no honours, receives no guests, without the authority of the British rulers. In order to withdraw his mind from dwelling on what *he is* and what *he might be* the resident encourages the prince in giving fêtes, flying kites (this they actually do for thousands of pounds), forming hunting parties,

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and making a great fuss about little affairs. To prevent His Highness from bribing any one, the said officer has the charge of the royal jewels, which he only gives out on state occasions. He manages to employ one-third of the nawab's servants, and keeps the *swaree* (or train) of elephants in his own grounds. In a word, a sovereign prince reigning over a territory in British India has about as much power as a state prisoner in the Tower, who, though flattered by an outward, an apparent respect, cannot command a single moment of real liberty.

The greatest difference, however, exists between these potentates and those who have refused to submit to our rule. I remember well a scene which passed with one of the latter when I was secretary to the resident at Moorshedabad. An envoy had arrived from the nawab of —— to the British resident, his mission having for its object the cession of a considerable territory to the East India Company. The utmost secrecy was to be observed; a single word betrayed might ruin the whole arrangement, and involve the prince in a serious affair with his neighbours. It was, therefore, with some difficulty that the native envoy would even consent to my being present, so jealous was he lest the subject of his embassy might transpire.

Mr. A——, the resident, received him with due courtesies in the large hall of his magnificent mansion, where he ordinarily held his *durbar*, or court. It was a magnificent chamber, floored with marble, and fitted up with several European looking-glasses. To do honour to the guest these mirrors were now uncovered, and the mats which occasionally covered the floor were rolled up and placed in a corner of the room.

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The conference had begun; several points had been mooted and settled, when I remarked the envoy's eye fix itself steadily on one of the glasses, as if he beheld some object of interest in it. He, however, made no remark, and went on conversing. The interview was nearly over, when he slowly rose and walked towards the corner of the room. He saw the surprise of Mr. A——. He read his astonishment at this strange proceeding in the midst of an important discourse; but he calmly turned round and remarked,—

"You will excuse me, great sir, if I am mistaken. You will, I hope, pardon me if I am correct in my supposition, and agree with me that my present act is dictated by justice and prudence. Those high in position cannot be too cautious."

The resident stared, unable to comprehend the proceeding.

"I may be mistaken, but I think not," added the native chief. Then, suddenly drawing his dagger, he plunged it into one of the rolls of matting. A hollow, a deep groan issued from it as he quickly repeated the blow. Then, turning with a look of triumph and satisfaction to Mr. A——, he quietly said, "I knew it was so."

"You have killed some one. I am sure that cry proceeded from no beast of prey. It was a human voice I heard."

"Precisely," replied the other, without changing a single muscle of his countenance, "precisely;" and he coolly unrolled the mat, in the centre of which a corpse lay weltering in its blood.

"What have you done? You have murdered him."

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"By stopping the slave's mouth I have saved the lives of thousands. He will never attempt to betray his master again," added he, spurning the body with his foot. "But I see, great sir, you don't like the sight of the wretch. If so do not let us think of this little incident any more; but with your leave we will adjourn to another room."

The resident assented. The cession of territory was agreed on. The dead black man was thrown into the Ganges. It would have been *impolitic* to have made any stir about the matter.

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STRANGE GAME.

No country in the world, perhaps, offers such temptations for the true sportsman as India. The quantity of game (particularly in Bengal) exceeds the most sanguine ideas of an untravelled Briton. The sport itself is considerably more majestic and more imposing. The wild peacock, the florikin, the blackcock of India, are incomparably beyond the puny game of the West. The traveller who has hunted the tiger, the lion, and the wild boar may almost venture to look down on fox-hunting as a childish amusement. The very dangers which environ the eastern chase give it an excitement as superior to that of Great Britain as the fox-hunt boasts over the capture of a tame cat, or the destruction of a harmless rabbit. Remember, I am an Indian; I speak as an Indian; I write as an Indian. Were I an Apperly or a Nimrod I might then view the subject in a different light.

The whole face of the country in the East seems alive. A thousand species of birds unknown in Europe—a thousand different kinds of animals omitted by some of our best zoologists—a thousand venomous but beautiful reptiles vivify the scene. With a gun over one's shoulder, a host of objects, besides those which are styled "legitimate game," offer themselves to tempt a shot (not that I ever had the craving desire which some men feel merely to kill and destroy for the sake of wanton cruelty), from their gay plumage and curious form.

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I was strolling through a wood "high up the country," with my Manton on my shoulder, my thoughts all centred in Europe, when I heard a curious noise in a tree almost immediately above me. I looked up, and found that the sounds proceeded from a white monkey, which skipped from branch to branch, chattering away with delight at beholding "a fellow creature of a larger growth," for so he decidedly seemed to consider me. For a few moments I took no notice of his antics, and walked quietly along, till suddenly a large branch fell at my feet, narrowly escaping my head. I again paused, and found that the missile had been dropped by my talkative friend. Without consideration I instantly turned round and fired at him.

The report had scarcely sounded when I heard the most piercing, the most distressing cry that ever reached my ears. The agonised shriek of a young infant burst from the little creature whom I had wounded. It was within thirty paces of me. I could see the wretched animal, already stained with blood, point to its wound, and again hear its dreadful moan. The last agony of a hare is harrowing to the tyro, and I have seen a young sportsman turn pale on hearing it. The present cry was, however, more distressing. I turned round, and endeavoured to hurry away. This, however, I found no easy task, for, as I moved forward, the unhappy creature followed me, springing as well as it could from bough to bough, uttering a low wailing moan, and pointing at the same time to the spot whence the blood trickled; then, regarding me steadily but mournfully in the face, it seemed to reproach me with my wanton cruelty. Again I hastened on, but still it pursued me. When I stopped it

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stopped; when I attempted to go forward it accompanied me. Never in the whole course of my life did I feel so much for a dumb animal; never did I so keenly repent an act of uncalled-for barbarity.

Determined not to allow the poor monkey thus to linger in torture, and at once to end the annoying scene, I suddenly came to a halt, and, lowering my gun, which was only single-barrelled, I was about to reload it for the purpose of despatching the maimed creature, when, springing from the tree, it ran up to within about half a dozen paces of me, and began to cry so piteously, and roll itself in agony, occasionally picking up earth, with which it attempted to stanch the blood by stuffing it into the wound, that, in spite of my resolution, when I fired I was so nervous I almost missed my aim, inflicting another wound, which broke the animal's leg, but nothing more. Again its piercing shriek rang in my ears. Horrified beyond endurance, I threw down my gun, and actually fled.

In about half an hour I returned for the purpose of fetching my Manton, fully expecting that the poor animal had left the spot. What, then, was my surprise to find a crowd of monkeys surrounding the wretched sufferer! As I advanced under the shade of some trees I stole almost close to them before they perceived me. I took advantage of this circumstance to pause for a moment, and watch their movements. The stricken monkey was crying out in the most piteous manner; the others were busily employed in tearing open the wound, trying to destroy the already dreadfully maimed creature. A shout drove them all away save the dying animal. I advanced; the little monkey was

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rolling in agony. I took up my gun, which lay beside him. I fancied he cast one look of supplication on me, one prayer to be relieved from his misery. I did not hesitate; with one blow of the butt end I dashed out his brains; then, turning round, I slowly returned to my quarters, more profoundly dispirited than I had felt for many months.

Take my advice, sensible reader, if you must live in India never shoot a monkey.

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THE ADJUTANT.

THE bird thus called may occasionally be seen in the booths of itinerant showmen in Europe; but cooped up, dispirited, and shivering, it is as different from the magnificent adjutant that crowns the parapets of the Government House in Calcutta, or proudly watches over the barracks in Fort William, as

"I to Hercules."

In their free state (I will not say wild, for they are as domesticated as the dog or cat), these splendid creatures stand about five feet high. To describe their figure and form would be superfluous. In their native country they strut about with a solemn, pompous step, seemingly as if aware of being held in much veneration. In fact, no one is allowed to molest them, under a fine of two gold mohurs for the first offence, and expulsion from India (if a European) for a repetition of it.

The reasons for the protection thus afforded to them arise, in the first place, from their being looked upon as "sacred birds" by the Indians; and in the second, from their very great utility in destroying vermin and venomous reptiles, and their constant habit of carrying off carrion and other filth. From the latter quality arises their *sobriquet* of "Calcutta scavengers." Their military designation has been conferred on them from the very curious circumstance of their never remaining in any place where soldiers are not to be found.

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They will follow even treasure parties for thousands of miles, and will take up their abode in the smallest cantonment or garrison, although, in the most populous city in Asia, no adjutant will abide, should the troops be removed from it, even for a single day. Add to this his stately march, which never goes beyond ordinary time, his long watchings, which he keeps like a vigilant sentinel, his stiff carriage, &c., and you have the combined reasons for his being called "the adjutant."

In his free state he seldom rises high. He flies from house-top to house-top till he sees some object on the ground worth his attention, when he suddenly descends to pick it up, and carries it back to his high perch. These birds have also a nasty habit of throwing their long legs perfectly horizontally from them, and skimming along about three feet from the earth, their heads poked out straight before them, neither looking nor turning to the right or to the left. Some few years ago an unfortunate *dhobee* (a washerman) was running along in front of the Staff Buildings in Fort William, when suddenly arriving at the corner where the brigade-major's house stood, he came full butt upon an adjutant which was thus amusing himself. The bird was unable to check his flight or alter his career, and the man, equally incapable of stopping, came into direct collision with him. The beak of the adjutant entered deeply into the abdomen of the wretched native, who almost instantly expired. The force of one of these huge creatures when on the wing must be more than equal to the power of a horse.

The cadets and many of the European soldiers quartered in the fort amuse themselves by watching the proceedings of

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these eccentric birds, and playing them various tricks. One of the strangest sights I ever saw was the flight of an adjutant from the cadets' barrack down a portion of the fort generally called Crows' Alley, from the myriads of these noisy birds that have built their nests there. He was sailing along, his long legs trailing behind him, when, as usual, his inveterate foes, the crows, attacked him, pecking away at his heels as he floated slowly through the air, unable to turn himself round upon them. In perfect security they pursued him, annoying him in every possible way, and only quitting him when he alighted for a moment on any tree or building. Unaware, however, of the approach of the adjutant, an unfortunate *hoodie* suddenly left the branch on which it was roosting, and flew across the enormous bird's track. The adjutant gave one snap, and, to my astonishment (for I declare upon my honour I saw him do it), he with little or no difficulty swallowed the luckless crow whole! I was curious to ascertain, as there exists a difference of opinion on the subject, whether the object thus taken passes directly into the stomach or the large pouch under the beak. In this instance I can positively affirm that it must have gone through the regular channels of digestion, the pouch retaining its usual size, seemingly empty and flabby.

One of my brother officers used to amuse himself frequently after tiffin by throwing down meat into the yard, upon which two or three adjutants were sure to pounce. He would at the same time let loose a little Scotch terrier, and enjoy the fight between the birds and the dog. At length one day one of the former, more hungry than usual, snapped at Master Vic's leg, which broke like a twig in the bill of his gigantic

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antagonist. Charles Frazer cursed the bird; but, as curses do not mend dogs' broken legs, the poor animal was maimed for life, to the no small chagrin of its master.

Another and more cruel joke often played off on these creatures is to tie two tempting pieces of meat together by a string some four or five feet long. Several birds instantly descend, and before the first has had time to swallow one of the tempting baits a second seizes on the other, and rising, as they always do when they have obtained food, they find themselves attached together by the piece which each has swallowed, and then comes the grand struggle to see which shall compel the other to disgorge, like the Scottish beggar-boy that has gained his bawbee by three licks and a wallop. Very often the piece of meat thus rendered up is again seized on by another bird, and so on several times. I confess I looked upon this sport both as filthy and cruel.

The most dreadful instance of this kind, however, which came to my knowledge was the following trick played off by a European artilleryman. Having got permission to come into Calcutta, he went to visit some brother soldiers quartered in the fort, and from mere idleness began to tease the adjutants. Several practical jokes had been exercised on these greedy birds, when suddenly, determining to eclipse all the tricks of his companions, he stole into the *bobachee counar* (kitchen), and, selecting a well-picked marrow-bone, he bore it off, and, filling it with powder, he affixed a slow match to it, and threw it down in front of a group of adjutants. In an instant it was seized and swallowed by one of them, which as instantly rose into the air with it. It had scarcely, however, ascended fifty feet from the earth when the powder exploded,

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and the wretched bird was blown to atoms, to the great amusement of the savage artilleryman.

These jokes, however, are sometimes attended with unpleasant results. Within a week afterwards this man paid somewhat dearly for his fun. A general court-martial was held upon him at Dum Dum, and he received, unpitied, I believe, by any one, three hundred lashes for one of the most wanton acts of cruelty ever inflicted on an unoffending animal.

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THE TANK.

It is not an unusual practice in Bengal to bring up the children of your servants under your own roof, and, training them to servitude from their earliest age, make them, as soon as they are old enough, parts of your establishment. Natives thus brought up are not only found to be in general the best servants, but also the most attached. The wife of Tom Saunders, a good-hearted fellow, who lived in Writer's Buildings, had reared from extreme childhood the daughter of an old *ayah* (a nurse) who had died in her service. The girl thus brought up was about fourteen years of age when I first visited the family, and certainly, if ever I saw a beautiful native, she was the person I should have pointed out as that being. Her manner was mild and modest, her form perfect. Her love for her mistress was a something bordering on adoration: no wonder, then, that Mrs. Saunders prized her almost as her own child.

Some of my readers may not be aware that the Writer's Buildings of Calcutta stand in a part of the town called Tank Square, from the circumstance of the centre being occupied, like St. James's Square in London, by a noble reservoir. As we have no pumps in the metropolis of Bengal, and few wells, the water used formerly to be taken from the river, and carried in goat-skins by the *bheestees* (water-bearers) to the different houses of their masters. When, however, Calcutta began to increase in size this was found a terrible inconvenience, some

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parts of the city being nearly a mile from the stream; so in course of time they formed the present tank, about a quarter of a mile from the river, which supplies more than half the town with water.

One day when I called on Saunders I was rather astonished to hear that many natives, some few animals, together with several inanimate objects, had lately and unaccountably disappeared from the neighbourhood, and that on the preceding day the body of a black man had been discovered in the square dreadfully mangled, evidently destroyed by some ferocious beast of prey. The marks of the wound did not correspond with those which could have been inflicted by a jackal's tooth, nor was it possible, even in its most dreadful state of starvation, that such an animal would dare to attack a human being. A tiger could scarcely be in the city unknown. What animal, then, could thus have fallen upon and destroyed the unfortunate man? It was a question which every one asked, but no one could solve. Considerably mystified, I left the house, promising to call on the following morning.

In compliance with my pledge, my palanquin jolted up to Writer's Buildings next day. The family were in a state of agony and terror beyond my power to describe. Jumma (the girl of whom I have already spoken) had disappeared. She had left the house at five in the morning to draw some water for her mistress; since that hour (it was now three o'clock in the afternoon) she had not been seen or heard of. To suppose she had wilfully deserted from the service of her she loved so well, to fancy she had been persuaded to elope, was beyond belief. Her fate was wrapped in

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mystery. Like a true Englishman, I instantly suggested that she might have committed suicide; not that she had any cause to urge her to such an act, but, as this dreadful crime more often arises from sudden madness than any premeditated scheme, I could not help thinking that the poor girl might have destroyed herself during an attack of temporary insanity.

Saunders instantly sent *peons* (messengers) off in all directions; but each returned, after a short search, without hearing of the unfortunate Jumma. As a last resource, by my advice, it was settled that on the following evening the tank in the middle of the square should be dragged. I agreed to superintend the operation, and accordingly repaired to the spot at the time appointed.

At least a hundred men were in attendance with drag-nets, not of small meshes like ours, but strong and large ones, made of very thick cord. The signal was given, and the sweeping commenced. For a time nothing opposed their exertions. At length a jerk, a sudden plunge, almost tore the nets from their hands. The natives stood aghast, as they were fully aware that there could be no large fish in this reservoir; but, by dint of scolding and the offer of an extra sum, I persuaded them to drop in still stronger tackle, and continue to drag the pond. It was soon evident that they had something extraordinary in their power, which, if allowed to remain longer in its proper element, might manage to get away. I therefore desired them instantly to haul the captive they had made on shore. This they did after some difficulty. No words can describe the alarm of the poor Indians, or my astonishment, on finding that they

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had entangled within their nets an alligator some fourteen feet long!

How this animal could have got into the tank was, indeed, a puzzle to every one. That it should have been generated in this pond was highly improbable; that it should have existed for so long a time (it was at least six or seven years old) undiscovered was almost impossible. Yet the only other position was equally astounding, namely, that it had crawled through half the town, and travelled unseen from the river to the reservoir. On these heads there was a general difference of opinion; which party was right heaven alone can tell. Suffice it to say that the monster was soon despatched and taken out of the nets. He was cut up before us all. With sickening horror I looked on; but, when I saw a human arm dragged from its inside—when I beheld and actually recognised the *bangles* of poor Jumma still encircling it, I could bear no more. I had not even courage to communicate the fact to Saunders. I jumped into my palanquin, and darted off to the fort, sick and disgusted in body and mind.

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A NIGHT WELL SPENT.

EVERY society, every ship, every corps, every grade, has its established butt. Paid liveried fools have given place to the fool *par excellence* of the present age, the easy, good-natured fellow, who takes every jest kindly, every practical joke as a matter of course, and almost fancies himself slighted when no one condescends to turn him into ridicule.

Jemmy Thompson was a griffin (*i.e.*, a new comer from Europe), and Jemmy was a goose. Jemmy, however, was one of the best-tempered fellows alive, so every one played off his tricks on him.

Now it so happened that a ship had just arrived in Diamond Harbour, on its way to Calcutta, from the Levant, and, as the plague was said to be raging at the latter place, the said vessel had been ordered to perform strict quarantine for forty days. The sentries on shore had received orders to shoot any one who dared to land from her, and under pain of death every one was forbidden to approach her. Of these circumstances Jemmy was profoundly ignorant.

Our friend Jemmy had annoyed several of the members of a reading club in Calcutta by daily seizing the —— (the daily paper), and pestering everybody to know if the "William and Mary," a ship which he had reason to believe was bringing him out some Madeira, had arrived.

Thus stood matters, when one day, on his entering the

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club and making the usual inquiries, Captain Molloy quietly arose and assured him that the wished-for vessel had arrived, and was even now lying down at Diamond Harbour, taking care to describe the exact position in which the tainted ship was moored. Jemmy ran home, ordered his palanquin, and arrived that evening about eight o'clock at this semi-seaport. Impatient to convince himself that his treasure had arrived, he did not hesitate, even at this late hour, to order a boat, and instantly caused himself, to the no small surprise of the persons who looked on from shore, to be rowed to the plague-stricken ship.

When he approached near her a person from the deck desired him to keep off. This Jemmy did not understand. He had no idea of having taken all this trouble for nothing, so he drew still nearer; nor was it till he was assured that his boat would be sunk, and the fact explained to him that the vessel had just arrived from Turkey, that he consented to sheer off. When, however, he learnt these little facts, he was just as eager to return to shore as he had been to board the merchantman.

What was Jemmy's horror and indignation on beholding, as he approached the strand, a musket levelled at his head by a sturdy sentinel, who swore, in tolerably round terms, that if he attempted to set foot on shore he would instantly blow out his brains.

"Here's a go!" quoth Jemmy; "and pray why am I to be thus treated?"

"You come from a plague-ship; my orders are strict; advance nearer and I fire."

Under these circumstances Jemmy thought it would be

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better to retire, so he ordered his *dandies* to pull up the river. Here, however, he was instantly stopped. If he attempted to force his way up, a gun protruding its ugly head through an embrasure in the fortress was instantly to be discharged at him. The boats of the Board of Health forbade him, on peril of instant destruction, to proceed down the river. What was poor Jemmy to do? He had but one chance. He quietly approached a man-of-war that was lying at anchor. Seemingly unobserved he came close to her, when, lo! a sudden report, and a ball knocked off his hat into the river! Jemmy roared loudly. His boatmen took the hint and sheered off. What was now to be done? Thompson had neither had tiffin nor dinner. He had no covering for his head, no place of shelter. The weather was stormy—the waves began to knock him about and bring on sickness. It was the rainy season, and the poor little fellow was drenched to the skin. Yet here he must remain, here abide, or run the risk of being sent into the next world by a musket-ball. He certainly did not relish either alternative; but, alas!

"Necessitas non habet leges."

All that night and until noon next day did our wretched little friend remain exposed to the elements, rowing about in despair, fearing that, like the flying Dutchman, he was destined to cruise here for ever.

About noon one of his quizzers, perceiving the scrape he would be in, obtained an order by which Mr. J. Thompson was allowed to land. The little gentleman instantly called

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his facetious friend out, and shot him through the leg, inflicting a wound which lamed him for life. Jemmy himself was laid up with a severe rheumatism and ague for nearly three months, and the whole affair finally turned out, like every other practical joke, a subject rather of sorrow than of fun.

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THE MICROSCOPE.

It is now many years ago since Mr. Clarke was sent out by the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge to Bengal, in order to convert as many of the benighted Indians to Christianity as possible. His talents were of the highest order, his zeal well known; it was, therefore, most sanguinely expected that his mission would be crowned with success. On his arrival, the Governor-General, finding that his means were small, and truly sympathising in the feelings of those who thus endeavoured to awake the sense of the heathen world to "light and life," gave him the direction of the Calcutta Free School and one or two other minor posts, which considerably increased the worthy missionary's income.

After several ineffectual attempts to convert the natives poor Clarke returned in despair to Calcutta, feeling more than half inclined to sail for Europe, so much did he take his repeated failures to heart. He was, however, dissuaded from this step, and, applying himself assiduously to the management of his scholars, he strove to banish from his mind the thorn which rankled there.

One day our missionary learned, to his great joy, that a Brahmin of the very first rank had arrived in the metropolis. Determined to bring matters to an issue, Clarke wrote to him, and begged him to meet him on a certain day, when he undertook to convince him (the Hindoo priest) of the errors of his faith. To this the Brahmin consented, and at the

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time appointed the heathen and the Christian champion met to discuss, in the presence of several witnesses, the merits of their respective creeds.

As is usual in polemical discussions the controversy was opened by several inconsequential queries and answers. For half an hour neither party had put forth a startling proposition, the wily Indian taking care to confine himself to the defensive. Tired at length by this scene, Clarke suddenly and abruptly asked him,—

"Are you forbidden to eat anything in which animal life exists?"

"I am."

"Have you ever broken through this law?"

"Never."

"May you not unconsciously have been led into this crime?"

"Impossible."

"Will you swear to it?"

"Most solemnly I do."

"Do you ever eat pomegranates?"

"Daily."

"Bring me some of that fruit, then," rejoined Clarke, turning to a servant. His order was complied with; the pomegranates were brought.

"Choose one." The Brahmin did so. "Cut it in two." With this direction he complied. "Place it here;" and Clarke assisted him to put it beneath a microscope. "Now look at it."

The Brahmin did so; but no sooner did he apply his eye than he started back with affright. The fruit was perfectly

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alive with animalculæ. The puzzled Hindoo drew out the pomegranate (which, perhaps, my readers are not aware is more closely filled with insects than any other fruit), looked at it, examined it, replaced it, and again beheld the myriads of living creatures with which it was rife. He felt it with his hand to convince himself that there was no trick in the affair; then, suddenly drawing himself up, he slowly uttered, *Bus; such hi;* ("Enough; it is true").

"You acknowledge, then, that you have sinned unconsciously? that everything being filled with animalculæ, invisible to the naked eye, you can neither eat nor drink without committing a crime?"

The abashed Hindoo bowed.

"Shall I show you how full of similar insects every drop of water is?"

"No; I have seen enough."

"Do you desire further proof?"

"I have a favour to ask."

"What is it? If I can I will grant it."

"Give me your microscope. I cannot buy it—give it me."

Clarke paused for a moment, for he had that morning paid ten guineas for it, and, being a poor man, he could ill afford to part with it; but as the Indian was urgent, almost to entreaty, he at length consented (especially as he thought the other would afford him in return some curiosity of equal value), and presented it to him.

The Brahmin took it, gave one look of triumph round the hall, and, suddenly raising his arm, dashed it into a thousand atoms on the marble floor.

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"What do you mean by this?" exclaimed Clarke in undisguised astonishment.

"It means, sir Christian," replied the Hindoo in a cold, grave tone, "it means that I was a happy, a good, a proud man. By means of yonder instrument you have robbed me of all future happiness; you have condemned me to descend to my grave wretched and miserable!"

With these words the unfortunate Brahmin quitted the hall, and soon after retired up the country.

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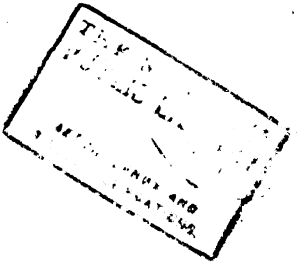

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THE WAHABEE ARABS.

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THE WAHABEE ARABS.

SOME century ago warfare in India was about as pretty child's play as the most feather-bed soldier could wish for. The returns of killed and wounded seldom exceeded a couple of men. The natives, indeed, did not often stand their ground when we appeared, but, retreating precipitately before a European force, left the field in our undisputed possession, thus enabling many a colonel to write a bombastic despatch, telling how with a handful of men he had gallantly laid siege to a leviathan mud fort, and, like Julius Cæsar, came but to "see and conquer." In those days the wretched Indians made use of bows and arrows, lances and creeses. They were undisciplined, and scarcely knew the use of fire-arms. It was, therefore, a mighty pretty thing to be an officer in the good old times, when the pay was just equal to treble the sum we now receive, and when, as once happened in Java, a conqueror went to besiege a city in a carriage and four. But, alas!

"Tempora mutantur, et nos mutamur in illis."

The warfare of the Indian army at present is no joke. This century has presented before us foes as determined and as brave as any European army that ever took the field. The Rajpoots, the Burmese, and the Arabs are about as ugly customers in the way of fighting as the most death-loving soldier could desire. With these the case is one of life or death. No capturing, no quarter is given. If you fall into

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the hands of the foe it is not to be shut up in a prison. Your life is instantly taken, and your body left for the benefit of the jackals and other beasts of prey. Your memory is soon obliterated, your gallant deeds unsung. No pompous grave-stone tells how you fought and fell. The name of the action in which you met your doom is scarcely demanded even by your nearest relatives. They are content to know that you were "killed somewhere in India." No Peninsular honours, no Waterloo-like medal rewards the hero who is lucky enough to escape from the eastern wars. The achiever of the most valiant exploits in Asia gains no renown, no fame, for all his bravery eastward of the Cape of Good Hope; and yet, as I said before, he may have gone through scenes of danger which even our boldest troops might well shrink from. Of this I will give you a short instance.

The dreadful news arrived in Bombay that a native force, consisting of two battalions of sepoys, had been surprised by a party of Wahabees, whom we had hitherto been foolish enough to look upon as allies, and that the attack had been made without the slightest provocation. They had fallen on the unsuspecting troops, and cut them to pieces. Three persons only escaped with life to tell the melancholy tale, and to call for retribution on the treacherous Arabs.

The 65th regiment was ordered on this service of just revenge, with directions to chastise these roving murderers in a manner calculated to dismay the other wandering tribes, and to strike terror into the hearts of the ill-intentioned.

This corps (called in India the "saucy whites") had seen not a little of eastern warfare. They had formed a part of the force before Booj, had gone through the campaign of

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Cutch, and even been before up the Gulf of Persia. They were well inured to the climate, and consequently fitted for the service they were now sent upon. The duty, however, was harassing and somewhat alarming, since our spies brought us in the most exaggerated accounts of the numerical force of our enemy. For several days it had been well known that the Wahabees were in the neighbourhood; but so stealthy were their movements, so well did they conceal their track, that though we did all we could to bring them to an engagement, or at least discover their exact position, we invariably found ourselves baffled by our wary foe. The commander of the expedition found that, unless by stratagem, there was little hope of inducing them to come out from their lurking-place to meet us in fair fight.

It was on the evening of —— that it was reported that some Arabs had been seen cautiously quitting a small ruined tower, which stood some three miles distant on the track we were pursuing. Captain —— was instantly ordered to march forward with his company, and to take possession of it. They were to scatter themselves, so as to seem as far as possible like the remains of a larger force, or distant detachment from the main body. In marching they were to appear fatigued and worn out, and take forward a few bullocks and stores, in order to impress the enemy with the idea that they were not in communication with the head-quarter force. A rumour was also circulated through the camp that our object having failed, the main body would commence its march homewards on the morrow, leaving merely the company sent forward to scour the country around for a few days, at the end of which time Captain ——

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would again join the battalion, and all return together to Bombay.

Very soon after these orders had been given, and the report circulated, two or three of our bullock-drivers deserted. This pleased us much, as we more than guessed that these men had gone off to give information to the enemy.

Captain —— marched off with a light heart, and at the head of as valiant a little body as ever volunteered to escaade a breach or carry a forlorn hope; but, according to orders, no spirit or energy seemed to animate them as they wearily trudged along. More than once as they went forward they could perceive that they were watched, and consequently well knew that the service they were engaged upon was one likely soon to bring affairs to a decisive result. This pleased them not a little, for they were sadly tired of "hunting Arabs." On taking possession of the deserted tower they found the cinders still on fire which had served to cook the victuals of the evening. Several other vestiges strewed about proved that the enemy had evacuated the building in great haste.

Having relieved themselves from all unnecessary equipments, the men fell in by order of their commander, who thus addressed them:—

"It is time, my men, that I should explain to you the nature of the service on which we are detached; for not only will it require all the steadiness that I know you possess, but also a certain share of individual judgment. The Arabs are close to us; they will probably attack us during the night, so we must make all fast, and keep a

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sharp look-out for them. They will perhaps come in great numbers, so you see, my lads, we must fight like devils, and defend this place for a full hour. At the end of that time the main body will be up in their rear, and so they 'll be caught between two fires. But, for fear of alarming them, Sir L. S—— dares not to stir an inch till he hears our muskets playing away at them. Now, lads, you know as much as I do, and I have but one recommendation to give you. Examine well your arms, and fire low. It is no ordinary foe we shall have to deal with."

With these cautions he dismissed them, after telling off one-fourth of his little force as sentinels to keep a sharp look-out on every side. To be thus cooped up like a decoy bird in a cage, or a sparrow to attract a hawk, was not pleasant, but our men were nothing daunted; indeed, they seemed rather pleased than otherwise at being selected for the dangerous duty. Midnight had passed before the slightest alarm was given by the men on the look-out, when one of our black followers, whose ears are far more acute than those of any European, came down to the officers, who sat dozing in the lower chamber, to inform them that he heard the noise of many persons assembling amongst the jungle, which was distant about half a mile.

In a few minutes our whole force was mustered, and posted in the most advantageous manner, while every eye was strained to catch a sight of the enemy. Being now on our guard, and anxiously listening, we could distinctly hear them spreading themselves out into an enormous semicircle, intending thus to close us in on all sides. That their numbers must be very considerable we well knew, from

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the very lengthened chain or line they were enabled to form. That their ferocity was unequalled, their muscular power great, and that they would extend no quarter to us, we were fully aware. Our only reliance was in the manœuvre that our commander had determined on performing: the steadiness and discipline of our troops, opposed to the rashness and want of warlike skill likely to be exhibited by this barbarian force—on these hung our sole dependence. On the whole, our feelings were not the most enviable in the world; but, as *thinking* is not the duty of a soldier, we refrained from breathing a single syllable of our thoughts to each other, but remained quietly awaiting the moment when we could show our comrades and our foes how we could *act*.

By degrees we saw the enemy stealing out of the brushwood and approaching our little fortress. They came along stealthily and unevenly. One body of about fifty was far in advance of the rest. As soon as this portion came within reach of our musketry a sudden volley was poured into them, which was almost instantly followed by a second from the opposite side of the tower, directed against another portion, who had also crept beyond the general line. The effect was like magic. Little aware how prepared we had been to receive them, this sudden, this unexpected attack from a force which they had come forward fully intent on annihilating before they could awake, so astonished, so terrified the Arabs that, thinking more troops were in the tower than they had seen, they suddenly retreated again into the jungle, uttering cries of savage fear and discontent.

For half an hour we believed they had dispersed; but just as day was breaking they again appeared, and began to

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surround our place of refuge beyond the reach of our muskets, and in a far more orderly manner. Several torches were now lighted by them, which a body of women kept brandishing about, till, at a preconcerted signal, they all simultaneously advanced on us. We clearly read their intention, which was to burn us in our building. This intent was obvious from the gestures of the wretches, whose every movement we could now plainly observe. As they came on—men, women, and children—pell-mell, uttering the most horrid and discordant cries, perfectly naked, armed with swords about five feet long, double edged, and as sharp and fine as razors, which they brandished with both hands over their heads, they kept yelling with savage fury, closing on us more and more. We now fired volley after volley; but though it sometimes seemed to inflict a slight check upon them, yet in another moment the gaps caused by our shot were filled up, and the circle pressed on. They were within two hundred paces of the tower when the look-out espied our main body, who, aware of the movements of the foe, were counter-manœuvring by also extending their line, and then moving forward their wings by *échelon*. They had managed, undiscovered by the savage Arabs, who were so intent on their expected victims as not to think of looking behind them, to inclose them in, and thus hoped to destroy them.

At length the Arabs came close under the walls, and some few attempted to escalade them. We poured on them a most effective volley, which threw those nearest to us into temporary confusion. At this moment a well-directed fire from the troops in their rear mowed down at least three hundred of them. Had the heavens fallen on their shoulders they could

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not have been more surprised. They turned suddenly round, and met a second discharge, which again did great havoc. The cries of the wounded were now added to the yells of the infuriated and dismayed multitude. Captain —— took advantage of their panic, and, after giving them one more round from our muskets, suddenly sallied out with fixed bayonets, and attacked them from the other side. Apparently assaulted on all sides, betrayed, outwitted, though they fought with bravery, and even foolhardiness, Captain ——, with his valiant little band, managed to pierce right through them and join his regiment, amidst the congratulations and admiration of his brother officers. And now began the regular fight, which lasted nearly three hours. Never did man behold a more harrowing sight, or more frequent exhibitions of undaunted courage on both sides. The weapons of the Wahabees were most murderous, their extreme length reaching even beyond the guard of a musket. I saw more than once a male, and on one occasion a female, actually, though impaled on a soldier's bayonet, cutting away with fiendlike fury at the soldier who had thus transfixed her. The children also were armed with short knives, doing their work of butchery, creeping down, and stabbing the wounded and the unwary. The men, who were of splendid make and considerable muscle, were, generally speaking, taller than Europeans. Their eyes rolling with rage, their teeth displayed in grinning anger, gave them the appearance of demons. Wounded, and even on the very point of dying, they still kept on hacking at us. There were also a few spearmen. The lieutenant of our grenadiers was singled out by one of these men. At that instant he fortunately stumbled, and, as he

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did so, the lance passed over his head, and buried itself three inches in the trunk of a tree. The Wahabee was instantly cut down by the lieutenant's covering sergeant. His strength must have been prodigious to drive the spear thus deep into the wood. During the action more than one woman was seen flying about cutting and stabbing, while her new-born infant was strapped over her shoulders. To spare them was impossible. We had to fight to a disadvantage, since regular troops are seldom called thus to dispute hand to hand; but at length we triumphed. The survivors fled; but we were too tired to pursue them, though they retreated in the greatest disorder; nor were we quite sure that we might not fall into some ambush. The bugles announced to us a retrograde movement. We retired half a mile, and, despatching an orderly to bring up our provisions and baggage, we quietly bestowed ourselves to rest, only leaving a few sentries in case of the foe re-mustering. This, however, did not happen.

About noon, the hospital carts having come up, the surgeons, with a detachment of men, went to the late scene of action to bury the dead and afford succour to the wounded. In several cases the enemy refused all assistance, and even once or twice attempted to attack the kind-hearted soldiers who would have helped and cured them. At length the party came to a fine-looking Arab, apparently insensible, but not dead. A bayonet had pierced his chest. The sergeant commanding the detachment, one of the best soldiers we had, seeing him thus dying, as he thought, from want of care, went up to him, and, pulling out the little flask of spirits he carried, raised him, and applied it to his lips. The treacherous Arab suddenly drew out from beneath him a sword which he had

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concealed, and, as the English soldier strove to lift him up, with one stroke he severed his head from his body.

To dwell further on this scene I am unwilling. Retaliation is wrong; but, alas! it is a feeling inherent in our nature. The fury of the party at seeing their loved brother soldier thus murdered was beyond bounds. I have heard (I fear with truth) that no wounded men were suffered again to betray us. All that were living of the enemy were instantly despatched.

It was for this campaign the 65th regiment obtained the honourable distinction of bearing a royal tiger on its accoutrements and banners.

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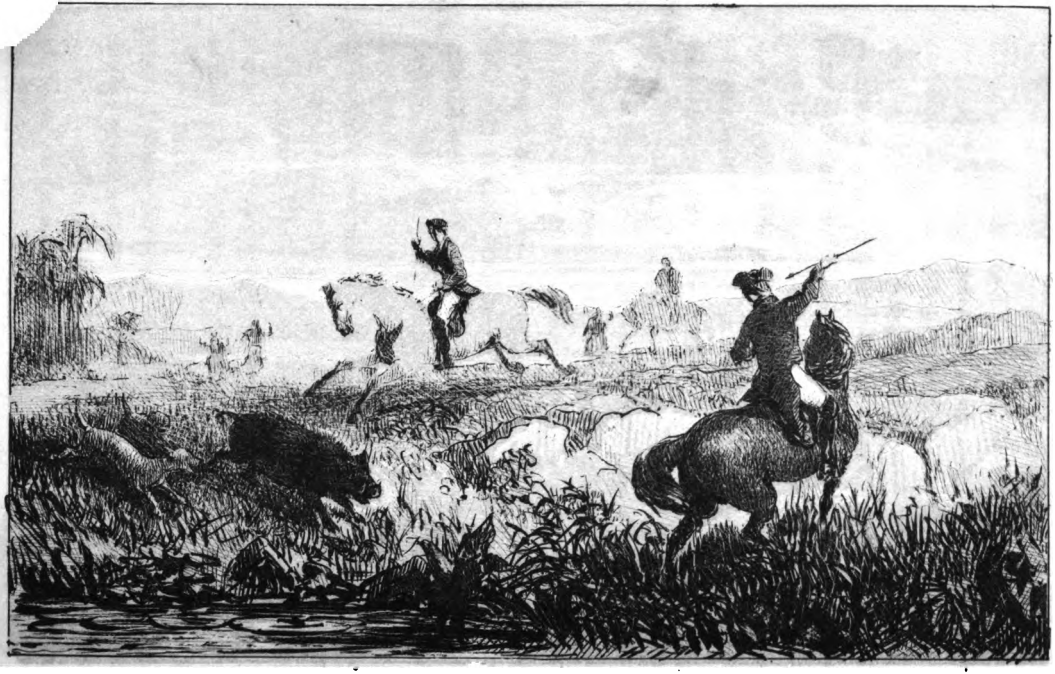

BOAR HUNT.

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THE BOAR-HUNT.

I HAD heard so much of this exciting sport, and was so anxious to partake of the inspiring influence of this noble chase, that I was up and dressed a full hour too soon, awaiting Charles Fitzroy, who had agreed to come over and breakfast with me previously to starting; the powerful exercise we were about to undergo requiring the stamina-conferring preparation of a good meal. At the appointed time my friend arrived. Never had I seen him in such high spirits. After a few moments' pause he confided to me the cause of his joy. Maria Selby had consented to accept his hand. He had cut out at least a dozen envious rivals, and gained the love of one of the loveliest girls that ever visited India. I could not do otherwise than congratulate him; at the same time I expressed my surprise that he could thus have left her even for a single day. With a look of triumph he assured me that, so strong was her attachment to him, that she had even consented to be present at the sport—a fact of which he was not a little proud, since it gave him an opportunity of displaying his superior horsemanship (he was one of the finest equestrians in Bengal) in her loved presence.

Presently our horses came round, and we trotted off to the appointed place of meeting. On our way we argued about the distance it was possible to throw our spears. For a trifling bet Charles undertook to send his weapon completely

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across the river which ran beside us, and which was about a hundred yards wide. I accepted his challenge. He made the trial, and succeeded. The question now was how to get back his spear. Fortunately we saw at a short distance a man about to cross the stream with his cows. The custom is to drive these animals into the water, which instantly swim across to their usual feeding-grounds, the owner holding on by the tail of one of them, which not only assists him in swimming, but scares away the alligators which here abound. A bargain was soon struck: for the sake of a few *pice* (pence) the native undertook to bring back the missile which Charley had so skilfully launched. In a few minutes more he was across the stream, and already held the javelin in his hand. The cows, however, which had willingly gone towards the rich pasture on the other side, sturdily refused to return, so the man was compelled to plunge in and swim back as best he could. He was just about the middle when we saw him make a sudden dart forward, almost out of the water, and utter a fearful scream. Again and again he called for help. I was about rushing in to his rescue, thinking he had been seized with sudden cramp, when I was suddenly laid hold of by my *syce*, who, with a face of terror, unable from agitation to speak, kept pointing to the river. Twice the cowherd disappeared, and as often rose, apparently struggling in great agony. A second object now became visible. Once it actually showed its wide jaws above the surface. The water was instantly stained with blood. I turned away in sickening horror; my pulses almost burst their bonds in terror and disgust. No help could be afforded; no aid could save the poor wretch. The scene was over; nothing but the en-

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crimsoned current remained to tell us that we had been the unconscious cause of a fellow being's death, who, for the sake of a few pence, perhaps to support a wife and children, now left destitute, had met with the most dreadful doom—had become the prey of the ferocious alligator.

Such an omen at starting was not likely to give us a great relish for our coming sport. When we joined our friends we were melancholy, and unfit to partake of their noisy merriment; yet, as Miss Selby was present, and had come here purposely to meet Fitzroy, it was impossible to turn back or leave them; so, *coute qui coute*, we mingled with the group, and soon became engaged in the animating chase. Would that my pen could do justice to the inspiring boar-hunt! Its dangers, its difficulties—the scope it gives for showing dexterity both as a spearman and a rider—the rate at which you traverse the unfrequented wilds of India—the excitement when the hog stands at bay, and only yields to the superior address of the bold sportsman, who risks his life in approaching him—the very horse you bestride sharing in your triumph, though conscious of his peril—all this and more gives zest to a chase generally acknowledged to be the first in the world.

Charley, however, for some time hung back; the scene of the morning had cut him up terribly. I kept close to him. Having ridden out with him I determined not to leave him, even though I lost the cream of the sport. Maria Selby, encouraged by her father, under his efficient protection, was at least a hundred yards in advance of us. The ground was uneven. We had to cross several *nullahs* (streams). This our fair *protégés* did with perfect safety, Charles Fitzroy,

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though unwilling to join her on account of his low spirits, keeping her always in sight. A second hog had been sprung, and we were going at a rattling pace, when suddenly, as Miss Selby crossed a high ridge—so high as to shut her out from sight—we heard her utter a loud cry. In a moment Fitzroy's spurs were in his horse's sides; like lightning he dashed after her, and, with a sudden bound, cleared the bank. A cry of terror, a shout of despair, and in the next instant I was beside him. How shall I paint the scene? how shall I even touch upon it? She had fallen; Fitzroy's hunter had but too well cleared his leap—he had carried his rider across the ridge—his fore-feet had alighted on the chest of the poor girl, who now lay a corpse in the arms of him who would have sacrificed a thousand lives to have saved hers! while on the other side stood the maddened father pouring out curses, calling down maledictions on the head of his daughter's unintentional destroyer. For awhile Fitzroy seemed to doubt the truth of what he beheld; he kept frantically calling to her who now lay dead in his arms. The father's revilings he scarcely seemed to hear. Not a tear dimmed his eyes—his misery was beyond tears. His senses had temporarily yielded to the shock, for he continued calling on her in a frenzy of grief to look up and smile upon him. He suddenly seemed to recollect himself, and at a glance read the whole extent of his misery. He let the corpse gently down, and with a sudden spring wrenched my spear from my hand; in the next instant he had driven it through his heart! He fell across the body of her whom he had destroyed—her whom he had loved so well. Their blood mingled in one stream. Their souls, it may be fairly hoped, arose together to a pitying heaven.

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PLACING A NAWAB ON THE MUSNUD.

THE nawab, or sovereign, of Moorshedabad had just expired when I joined my regiment at Berhampore, and the majority of our garrison were ordered out to attend his funeral. Accordingly, under a burning sun, which laid up about one-fifth of them with fevers, they marched over to the palace of the defunct, a distance of eight miles, where they rendered him military honours, and returned to their cantonments. Just as I arrived they were all jaded, fagged, and tired. The next morning, however, each of the officers received a couple of shawls, worth about forty pounds the pair, with an intimation that they were permitted by the government to accept them; for, without this last addition, they would have been compelled, under pain of being dismissed the service, to send them back. The men received a rupee each, and a letter of commendation appeared in garrison orders. No wonder, then, when I received a command to attend, together with the rest of my corps, the ceremony of placing His Highness's successor on the *musnud*, or cushion of state, I felt delighted; for I naturally argued that, as two shawls had been received by each officer for following a dead man to the grave, four at least would be the reward of those who should assist his successor in celebrating his advent to the throne. Besides, I knew I should see a great deal of Indian life in its higher grades, and be able to form a judgment of their habits and customs. I was all impatience, therefore, till the day arrived.

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On the previous evening I drove over to the resident's house, which was situated within two miles of Moorshedabad, to supper, having agreed to accompany him the next morning to the ceremony. The gentleman who then held the post of resident was one of the most honourable, generous, and hospitable men in British India, profuse even to a fault, princely in all his ideas. He was above the power of bribery; no money could purchase his opinion. He was one of the right noble sort, who are, alas! fading daily away in our eastern possessions, making room for the cold, sordid calculator, who only looks forward to the hope of amassing riches wherewith to return home; and lucky was it that such a man held the situation at the time I speak of, for during supper a scene occurred which I shall never forget. The circumstances are as follow:—The resident, amongst other charges, has that of the custody of the crown jewels belonging to the nawab. These he usually keeps in a strong *godown* (cellar) fastened with English locks, and made as secure as possible. Now it so happened that, on the resident visiting the place where these treasures were lodged, some four or five days before the coronation, it was discovered that several valuable gems were missing: how, when, or by whom extracted was a mystery. He therefore called in witnesses to prove the fact, and reported the circumstance to head quarters. Suspicion, very strong suspicion, fell on some of the very highest natives about the court. Nothing, however, had yet been proved, so the resident (whom we will call Bedford) was commanded to allow the use of the jewels, as they were, to the new nawab during his coronation; that over, they were instantly to be replaced in the cellar, and Bedford was to close the door, and

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affix his official seal on it. Thus stood the matter when I arrived at his house.

We were sitting at our evening meal when our host was called out. He remained absent nearly half an hour; which, as we all looked upon him as a pattern of politeness, astonished us not a little. At the end of that time he returned to us pale and agitated; his cheerfulness had fled; he had evidently had a most exciting interview. When every one else had retired he thus explained it to me:—

"You may remember my being summoned from the table this evening. You were not more astonished at my being thus disturbed in the midst of gaiety than I was myself; but the rank of the person who sent for me was so high that I did not dare to disobey the call; so I descended, and found two of the highest natives in the country awaiting me, who desired an instant and strictly private audience. This I immediately granted them, though I considered their visit at this late hour strange and unaccountable. A few words told me their business, which was touching the jewels. They were too cautious to admit that they had purloined them, but from their discourse I learnt that the gems had been taken out, and made use of for the purpose of raising a temporary loan on them; that they were ready to be returned, provided I would allow of their being so without making an inquiry into the circumstances. Of course I was not justified in accepting this proposition, and told them so. After a very long conversation they at length made me the following offer, namely, that if I would to-morrow evening place my seal not exactly on the opening or crack of the door, but rather on the side of it, the jewels should be replaced, and I should receive for my

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share in the business two lacs of rupees (£25,000), or even more if I required it. I am a poor man—I am in debt; the offer was sadly tempting, since it involved no dishonesty, no loss to government. On the contrary, it insured the return of the missing jewels. But, alas! it was a direct disobedience of orders, a dereliction from the straight line of conduct I have ever pursued. It might be looked upon as a participation in their guilt. The struggle was severe; they urged me by every argument, and even produced diamonds and other gems to tempt me. They vowed eternal secrecy, and went so far as to increase their offers. My honour, however, thank God, rose superior to all other feelings. I rejected their terms, and have sent them away. The mental conflict has been awful, but I can now go and lay my head on my pillow with a pure conscience; though I know that I must now live and die in this country, unable to pay off those debts which their bribes, had I accepted them, would have enabled me to do. To-morrow evening you shall see me place my seal, loyal and true to the government I serve."

Having thus said, poor Bedford, who subsequently performed his promise, hurried to his couch.

The next day, about three o'clock, we drove over in state to Moorshedabad. The whole city was thronged with natives from every part of the province, dressed in their gayest attire. While the resident went to have a private audience with His Highness I strolled about the precincts of the palace. In the courtyard, amongst other strange company, I perceived several tame cassowaries stalking about. Within an hour afterwards one of these enormous ostriches broke the thigh of a poor soldier by a single kick of its powerful leg. But what amused me most was a kite

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match, on which two rajahs were staking their money; the amount pending on the result being considerably above five thousand pounds. The plan of this sport is to send up two large kites, the strings of which are covered with the finest pounded glass and other cutting materials. The adversaries then endeavour to get their kites as high as possible, and, crossing their cords, try to cut each other's string. The kite first severed from its flier loses the wager. The shouts, the noise, the anxiety of the spectators, can only be equalled by the dexterity of the players themselves. Ridiculous as it may appear in Europe, I never beheld a more exciting sport—one which, if ever introduced at home, I feel confident will become far more popular than many of our present amusements.

I next visited the cockpit. Here I found princes and private soldiers, chiefs and their dependents, all promiscuously mingled, screaming with delight as the cruel combat went forward, staking whole fortunes on the main. So prized is this sport in India that several persons had travelled two hundred and three hundred miles to be present. Many of the cocks had been brought from provinces at least one hundred and fifty miles off. At length the sound of tom-toms and gongs told us the nawab was about to seat himself on the musnud; a ceremony to behold which I instantly rushed. It took place in a very large tent outside the palace. All the authorities were present. The high black men were absolutely covered, I may almost say borne down, with jewels. The nawab, a young man of about five-and-twenty, had a ruby on one of his arms fixed in a bracelet, and an emerald on the other, each worth some

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five or six thousand pounds. One of the diamonds which glittered in his turban (and he had at least fifty) was valued at twelve thousand pounds. Every head shone with gems; every black foot was uncovered; even the British resident and other European civilians had taken off their shoes as a mark of respect. The military alone remained booted. Bedford read a proclamation in Hindostanee, which His Highness answered; then, giving him his hand, he rose, and seated himself on the royal cushion: a volley from the troops outside announced the event. Every Indian instrument known took up the sound, and echoed it. The people shouted throughout every part of the city, while high native officers came round, and presented every one at the ceremonial with splendid gifts. These we were only allowed to touch, as a tantalising, a false sign that we accepted them. They were instantly handed back to the nawab's treasurer. A song was drawled forth in honour of the new sovereign, and we (the Europeans) adjourned to the palace, where a splendid repast was prepared for us.

Nothing could exceed the splendour of this banquet. The resident presided, and in presence of the assembled native chiefs we drank His Highness's health. After about two hours thus pleasantly occupied we returned to the tent, where we found a large body of Nautch girls dancing before the prince, who seemed sinking under the fatigues of the day, overcome by the screeching of several persons who kept singing around him. He, however, occasionally roused himself up, and threw presents to these strange posturers, whom I could not for the life of me admire. The tent was so redolent of attar of rose, orange flowers, and cajeput oil,

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that two European ladies were carried out fainting. Never was I more thoroughly delighted than when we were summoned back to the palace, to behold from its windows the fireworks which were to close the sights of the day.

In the whole course of my life I never beheld anything so superb. Illuminated palaces floated down the river, which almost washed the walls of the royal residence. In an instant these sank and rose up again, having changed their form into a garden or forest of fire, through which blazing serpents meandered. Next a stupendous fortress came swimming down the stream, when suddenly a fleet of illuminated boats attacked it with rockets, and battered it to pieces. Fiery fish rose and sank in the stream. The air was filled with every coloured flower. Dragons tore about in the air, while trees of fire rose from the waters. To describe or do justice to this magnificent scene would be impossible. It lasted half an hour, and cost above twelve thousand pounds. It was worth almost a trip to India to behold. The following week I received notice, together with my brother officers, that each of us was to have two shawls as a present. Our commandant reported the circumstance to head quarters, and at the same time solicited permission to accept them. This the government peremptorily refused—why or wherefore I never could learn.

The business of the royal jewels was hushed up. Bedford eventually returned to Europe a poor man.

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A TRAITOR'S DOOM.

As our regiment marched sullenly along I could see the tear glisten in the eye of many a hardy soldier. So true it is, as Bayley has expressed it in his beautiful ballad,—

> "Go search the foremost ranks in danger's dark career,
> Be sure the hand most daring there has wiped away a tear."

Yes, the sunburnt warrior, whose lion courage I had almost wondered at the evening before, when scaling the walls of the fort out of which we were now marching, held down his head and uttered an involuntary sigh as we passed the spot where our sepoys were still busy, assisted by a few Europeans, in burying our dead. The number of men we had lost was far beyond that which we had anticipated. Our well-laid plans had been made known to the enemy, and counter-strategy had been successfully employed to oppose our attack; in a word, we had been basely betrayed by one whom we had fancied our ally. The traitor had fallen into our hands, and little shrift had been allowed him. We were now marching forth to his execution, sternly going to behold the last moments of one whom we had formerly looked upon as our true, our valued friend; for he who had allowed the ties of country to rise paramount to the duties he owed as an honourable ally was a chief of considerable power. With an education semi-European, he had hitherto fought with us nobly, and, though a youth of little more than twenty years of age,

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had already been twice noticed in general orders. He was handsome in no common degree; a more affable and kind-hearted Indian I never met. He was of a high caste, and commanded a considerable native force. In an evil hour he had listened to emissaries, who painted us to him as the enslavers of his country. His relatives had espoused the opposite side; his brother had been killed in an action which had taken place; but all this, I am convinced, would never have tempted Dewallah Surhat (so I will call him) to have betrayed us. How that deep, that dreadful task was accomplished I never have, I never shall learn. Suffice it to say, Dewallah became a traitor—an unsuccessful traitor. Convicted of the offence, he had been doomed to die. The only grace accorded him had been to choose the manner of his death. He unhesitatingly preferred the one I am about to describe, and to behold which we were marching out of C—— the morning when this sketch opens.

On arriving on the ground we found three sepoy corps and a detachment of horse artillery already on the spot. As they only awaited our coming to complete the arrangements, after a halt of a few minutes attention was called, and we formed a hollow square, into the centre of which a tumbril quickly drove. From it the prisoner, in company with the provost-marshal and his deputy, descended. Never did I behold him look more firmly intrepid. His air was rather that of grave triumph and martial dignity than convicted guilt. Had I been told to pick out a traitor from the assembled troops he would have been the last person I should have fixed upon. He walked firmly to the centre of the square, and, facing the brigadier-general in command with a look of unshaken

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courage, bowed as he took his station, and calmly awaited the reading of his sentence.

The deputy judge-advocate was desired to read out an account of the proceedings of the general court-martial held at C—— on the prisoner, Dewallah Surhat, lately commanding the auxiliary native field force, charged with having, on the night of the 15th of October, 18—, willingly and treacherously betrayed the British forces, with whom he was apparently acting as an ally, and thereby, &c.

While the proceedings were being read the prisoner was much agitated whenever the treason he had been guilty of was alluded to. He evidently was much pained. The convulsive movements of his countenance showed how acutely he felt his position; but when the whole trial had been recited, when the verdict of "guilty" was pronounced, he seemed suddenly to recover his immobility. When the sentence of death was read out he did not quail in the slightest degree; and finally, when the sentence of the court condemned him "TO BE BLOWN FROM A GUN," he looked with an almost triumphant glance on his late friends, who stood horror-stricken around him.

The general was perfectly overcome. His former friends and brother officers shuddered with dread at his coming fate; for, though the sentence was strictly just, yet many who had never seen this mode of execution drew back with terror and disgust. Surhat was the calmest man on that field as we wheeled back into line preparatory to the dreadful scene.

We took open order, and the prisoner marched along the line, and up again between the ranks. He was then taken to

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a spot some hundred yards in front of our centre. No coffin was there to receive his remains, as I had previously seen at military executions—no friends to take his body away after his doom had been completed—so clearly was it foreseen that his annihilation would be complete, his whole frame scattered to the winds, the morsels left in all directions for the beasts and birds of prey.

The troops were now "told off" in three divisions, the wings wheeled up, the artillery brought into the centre, thus as it were re-forming a hollow square except on the side on which the prisoner stood. A single gun was now brought up, turned round, and unlinked. The drivers willingly trotted away to the rear. The prisoner was desired to advance; he did so within a pace of the muzzle. The deputy provost-marshal produced a cord with which to bind him to the gun. For the first time Surhat seemed shaken. He made a special request that he might not be tied down. The general was solicited, and consented that it should be so. The prisoner turned upon him a look of the sincerest and most heartfelt gratitude, shook hands after the European manner with the provost-marshal, and after receiving his directions, agitatedly given, walked boldly up to the cannon, and, pressing his body against the muzzle, threw his arms round the gun itself, gave one last glance, and stooped his head down to the piece. At the same instant a signal was given, the ready-lighted match was applied to the touch-hole, a flash of fire, a volume of smoke, a roaring sound re-echoed from the neighbouring hills, and all was over.

A few drops of blood, a few scattered remnants, scarcely

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recognisable as ever having belonged to humanity, were all that now remained of the once proud, the generous, the brave chieftain, who, by thus choosing a doom which brought total earthly annihilation, seemed determined to leave behind him no record of the basely-fallen chief, the hated name of traitor.

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MALAY VENGEANCE.

I VISITED the coast of Coromandel purposely to see the far-famed procession of Juggernaut, which I found so far from falling short of those accounts I had hitherto looked upon as exaggerated, that, although I had gone to see it fully prepared to view horrors, I came away sickened and terrified by scenes more revolting than imagination ever pictured. Indeed, to this very moment some of the incidents recur with such striking force, that I even now regret ever having looked on such abominations and cruelties. Men slicing their flesh with sharp knives, mothers sacrificing their children, bigots inflicting every torture on themselves, and fanatics dashing their heads beneath the enormous wheels of the car, which in the next moment crushed their skulls before my face, were amongst some of the lesser terrors of this disgusting *fête*, from which, after a few hours, I hastened away, fully determined never again to revisit it.

On my way back to Madras I stopped at the house of Mr. T——, one of the best fellows I know, one of the sincerest and most upright magistrates in India. Kind to his servants, an excellent parent, T—— was generally beloved by all who knew him.

When I arrived I found my friend absent. His wife, however, did the honours for him, and gave me a pressing invitation to remain a couple of days until her husband's return. She had three children, was one of the most

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elegant women I know, and, though of a hasty temper, was good-hearted and well-intentioned.

I accepted her invitation, and retired to dress for dinner. I had not completed my toilet when I heard a great bustle in the house; so, hastening to finish my task of adorning, I quickly descended to the hall, where I found Mrs. T—— bitterly lamenting the loss of a superb emerald necklace, which had suddenly disappeared from her trinket-box, wherein she declared she had carefully deposited it a few days before.

A strict search took place. Every servant was examined, but all to no purpose; till it was suddenly recollected that a young Malay boy, about ten years of age, who had hitherto acted as a sort of page, had been sent to the case to bring down a ring to his mistress on the previous morning. The boy had also been seen with some money, which he, however, averred he had received from his father; and in this statement he was borne out by his parent, who was one of the khitmutgars in the household; but, as it was only natural he should endeavour to screen his child, little attention was paid to his corroborating testimony.

The result was that suspicion pointed so strongly at the boy, that his mistress desired him instantly to be tied up and flogged until he confessed what he had done with the stolen necklace. The unhappy father threw himself on his knees, and, kissing the feet of Mrs. T——, besought her to relent; but, considering the case too clearly brought home to the young Malay, and annoyed at his refusal to admit his guilt, she refused to listen to the parent's appeal.

The boy was tied up and punished till the blood actually

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flowed down his back. The father was present at the scene, and, though he nearly bit his lips through, he did not attempt to interfere. His son endured the torture without a groan, and after three dozen lashes he was taken down fainting, without having made any confession.

The next morning he was again flogged; but he still remained obdurate. A third infliction on the following day had no better effect; so, by my advice, Mrs. T—— abstained from further attempts to elicit an admission of the theft until the return of her husband, which had been postponed unavoidably for another week.

The boy speedily recovered, and soon returned to his work. The father, though seemingly much hurt at heart, uttered no complaint, and performed his duties as usual.

At the end of the week my friend T—— arrived, bringing with him some pleasant companions, who were, with true Indian hospitality, made welcome; and in a few hours they found themselves thoroughly at home under my friend's roof.

The next morning after breakfast the fond husband brought down a collection of little gifts he had procured for his wife and children, who eagerly flocked round him, and expressed their joy

"As each new treasure met their longing eyes."

"By the by, here is the necklace you may remember, my dear," said T——, turning to his wife, "you desired me to take from your trinket-box and get repaired;" and he drew forth a superb set of emeralds.

In an instant I saw him rush forward, only just in time to

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catch his wife, who fell swooning into his arms. My friend, who doted on her, was in indescribable agony. The suddenness of the fit, for which he was wholly at a loss to account—her sobs and bitter exclamations as she slowly recovered—seemed to wring his heart. The whole scene was one of mystery to me till with a sudden effort she raised her head, and in a tone of unaffected sorrow exclaimed,—

"Forgetful wretch that I am! I have falsely accused poor Sidommy, and punished him for stealing it."

I started with horror. In a moment his countenance assumed a grave, a severe expression, and as his wife explained the affair to him I could see the pain it gave him. When it was concluded he pondered for a few moments, then desired Sidommy and his father to be summoned.

When they entered T—— in a few words explained to the boy that his innocence was now manifest, and that the whole business had arisen out of an unfortunate mistake; and, as a recompense for his unmerited sufferings, he made him a present of a splendid European dress he had brought home for his eldest boy, who, though somewhat younger, was about the same size as the Malay.

Sidommy appeared delighted, and rushed from the room to clothe himself in his new garments. The father bowed low, and left the room without raising his eyes or uttering a syllable.

But a short interval had elapsed when the young page, with tears in his eyes, announced to his mistress that his father, on seeing him dressed, had instantly seized him and torn his clothes from his back, declaring that no finery, no European ornament, could ever cover the disgrace that had been inflicted

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on him, and that he had in his fury utterly destroyed the handsome jacket his son had just received as a present.

T—— was naturally angry at this daring impertinence, and would have punished the khitmutgar had not his wife strenuously dissuaded him from it, by pointing out that such feelings were only natural in a parent, and that time only could wipe them out. Nothing more was therefore said about it, and all went on as quietly as before.

About ten days after this incident a letter from Madras, announcing the expected arrival of T——'s sister at that city, made my friend determine to go and meet her. It was agreed that I was to accompany him, get my leave of absence renewed, and return with him to spend another month in his pleasant mansion.

The evening before we started the Malay khitmutgar came in, and begged as a favour that his son might be allowed to accompany us, urging his prayer with great force, and so beseechingly that, although my friend at first objected to take him, he finally consented, and away we went in high spirits to meet a young lady who, T—— had foretold, would become my future wife.

On our arrival at Madras we were doomed to meet with disappointment. The young lady had changed her mind, and, instead of seeking a partner amongst the pagoda-laden Madrassees, had chosen to marry a handsome young ensign in a marching regiment at home, who by dire necessity was compelled

"To live on his pay,
And spend half a crown out of sixpence a day."

We therefore hurried through the little business we had to

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transact, and joyfully set out again on our return, sending, however, a dawk-courier on before, that our arrival might be expected.

When we arrived at a small village about four miles from T——'s house we were not a little surprised to find all his servants awaiting him. He naturally sought an explanation, when he found that they had all come there by desire of their mistress, who had received directions to this effect from their master. T—— was not a little astonished at so strange a statement, as he well knew he had given no such orders, and demanded if Mrs. T—— herself had told them to come, but found that these commands had been conveyed to them through the Malay khitmutgar, who alone had remained behind.

I confess I looked upon it as a hoax, or a curious mistake, at which I was inclined to smile. Not so my friend, who seemed agitated, as it were, by the presage of some coming evil, and hastened on.

As we approached the house we saw every window and door closed. Neither his wife nor children seemed to welcome my friend, who jumped out of his palanquin, and ran forward like a madman. I followed him, and found him vainly endeavouring to burst open the verandah door. With my assistance he effected this, when, horrid to relate, the first object which met our view, and that of the affrighted Sidommy, was the body of the Malay, surrounded by a pool of blood, his throat cut from ear to ear, whilst in one hand he grasped the razor with which he had destroyed himself, and in the other the very scourge which had inflicted the stripes on his poor boy!

I can scarcely tell the rest. My feelings were far too

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painfully harrowed up to describe what we discovered in the next moment—the still warm bodies of my friend's adored wife and his three children, evidently murdered as they slept by the revengeful Malay, who, after washing out his dishonour as the falsely-reputed father of a thief in the blood of his master's family, had with the same instrument put an end to his own existence.

The wretched boy who had caused this dreadful deed, though innocent of all participation in the crime, was so horrified that he fled, never to return. T——, after a few weeks spent in the true mourning of the heart—a mourning which turned his jet black hair to grey within three days—returned to Europe, where he still lives a wretched and heart-broken man.

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A TIGER-HUNT.

THE anticipated delights of this royal chase so filled me with excitement, that during the night preceding it I could scarcely get a wink of sleep, jumping up every ten minutes to see whether it was yet daybreak. At length the appointed hour arrived, and I sallied out on horseback as far as the political resident's, whence the whole party was to set forth in regular order. When I arrived at least a dozen elephants stood ready in the *compound* (field) before the door. Some had *howdahs* (we call them in England castles) for the ladies and elderly sportsmen; others had mere pads, resembling a couple of well-stuffed mattresses, fastened on their backs with strong iron girths. One of these animals was already mounted by half a dozen musicians, and another was laden with fire-works, and persons to discharge them, should the tiger refuse to leave the jungle. About fifty men on foot were lolling about, or talking to the *mohuts* (the men who, riding on the elephant's neck, guide him, and urge him on with a sharp-pointed iron instrument), bringing out their masters' rifles, and stowing away provisions in the *howdahs*, while a large party of English gentlemen and ladies looked on from the verandah. A more spirit-stirring scene I never saw; it was certainly the most picturesque affair I ever beheld in India.

After a light breakfast we proposed to mount our elephants, which each came forward in turn, and knelt down while we ascended by a short ladder to our *howdahs* and pads.

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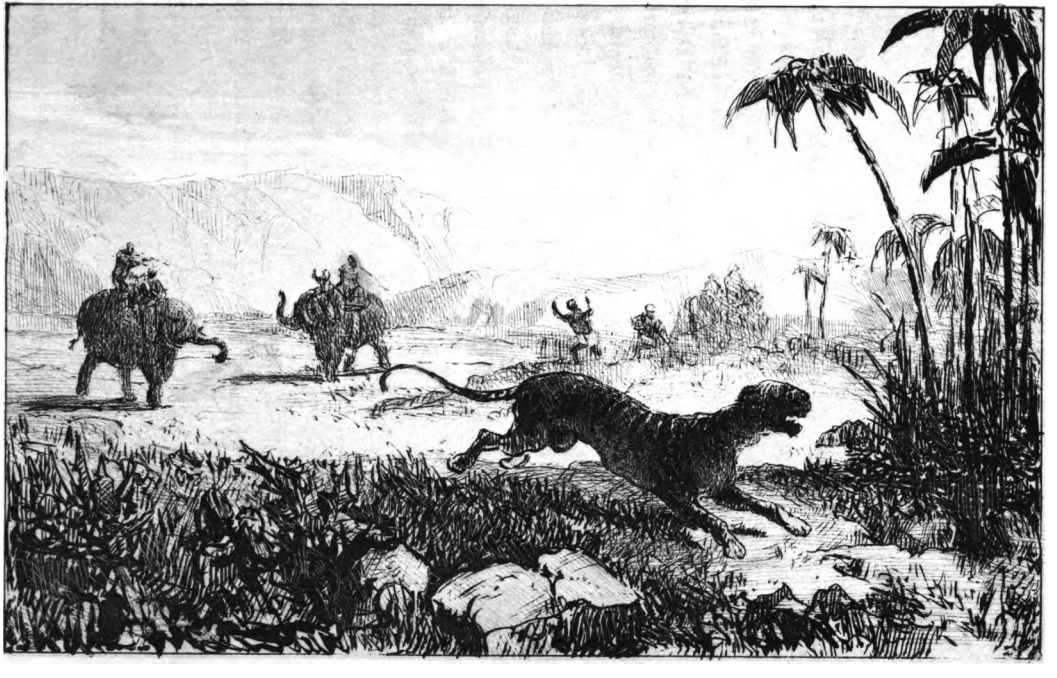

TIGER HUNT.

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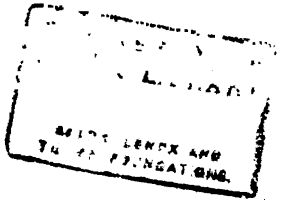

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Every gentleman carried two rifles. In high glee the whole party set out.

I confess that I felt somewhat alarmed when, arriving at a deep *nullah* (stream), the animal on which I was seated coolly plunged into it. In a second he was off his legs. I could not help fancying he was sinking; for only about six inches of his back and the extreme end of his trunk appeared out of the water, level with which I was actually floating along. The animal, however, swam steadily forward, guided by his *mohut*, and landed safely on the opposite bank. The rest of the party crossed in equal safety.

In passing through a native village immediately on the other side we came up to a poor little infant of only a few months old, lying unguarded in the middle of the road. The elephant which led the van, without stopping, suddenly picked up the poor child at the very moment when I thought he must inevitably have crushed it, and in the most gentle manner placed it on the thatched roof of one of the low cottages. This, which I thought an occurrence of extreme interest and astonishment, seemed to inspire no surprise in the breasts of my fellow sportsmen, who afterwards assured me that the sagacity of these noble creatures is only equalled by their love for young children and persons who are kind to them. No wonder, then, I felt annoyed and disgusted when I beheld, shortly afterwards, a *mohut* wantonly and barbarously amuse himself by prodding the head of one of the elephants with his iron skewer; digging it into the flesh with a fury and savageness which to this moment I cannot account for. The persons on the animal called out to him, and remonstrated with him on his unnecessary cruelty,

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reminding him of the revengeful temper of the animal. After a time he desisted, and, as the elephant showed no signs of anger, we hoped no serious consequences would follow.

The motion felt by persons thus travelling is strange, and extremely fatiguing to those unaccustomed to it. To sit stiffly, or attempt to resist the sway of the body caused by each step of the elephant, is painful and wearisome beyond description. The best way is to yield to his motion, as a sailor does on board a ship, and, swinging backwards and forwards with his stride, save yourself from the rude jerks which an attempt to remain steady subjects you to. After an hour's travelling we arrived at the edge of a thick jungle, in which the royal beast was said to lurk. We therefore took up different points, in order to "view him" as he left the covert. Here we waited for some time: at length a couple of elephants entered the jungle, and began to beat about.

At this instant we heard a sudden, a piercing cry. We looked round. An elephant was in the act of trampling an unfortunate wretch to death. It was the imprudent *mohut* who had a short time before so savagely goaded the animal he rode. At an instant when all was still, when every one was looking out eagerly to behold the tiger break cover, the revengeful animal had suddenly twisted his trunk round his rider, and with the greatest ease first raised him in the air, then dashed him with force on the ground, lifted him again, and a second time threw him on the earth; then, suddenly advancing, he began to trample on the now insensible Indian, who in another moment was a shapeless, disgusting lump of human clay, his ensanguined and disfigured corpse resembling

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in no way the form of a man. Satisfied at his vengeance being complete, the elephant raised the remains of his victim, and, throwing them into the jungle, quietly and safely trotted home, without guide or restraint, to the no small terror of the persons seated on his back.

The self-avenging elephant had scarcely got out of sight when suddenly a royal tiger bounded out of the brushwood close by the animal I was seated on. My companion and myself instantly fired at him. The nearest party to us also did the same, which I could not help looking on as a most dangerous act, since the slightest mistake in this cross-firing must inevitably be attended with the most fatal consequences. On the present occasion, however, nothing of this kind occurred. The tiger had evidently been hit; but, springing forward, he galloped along. We now began to pursue him; but it was very much after the manner that a good shot in England marks down his game and follows it, for to keep up with the royal animal was impossible. We trotted about eight miles an hour; the tiger about sixteen at the least. We therefore contented ourselves with following him, and dislodging him whenever he got into cover. Finding a village in front of him, the people of which had turned out and fired several shots, the hunted animal endeavoured to double. In effecting this manœuvre he came within shot of others of the party, who discharged their rifles with such effect that in a few moments the tiger lay senseless on the ground. We now descended from our posts and approached to view our prize, which seemed of more than ordinary size. We had just come up to it, when Lindsay, by way of explaining some remark he had made relative to it, touched it with his gun.

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Imagine our horror and consternation when suddenly the beast sprang up, and with one bound cleared the circle. For an instant we stood paralysed, stupefied with excess of fear; then, rushing towards our elephants, we got *under* them, this being a comparatively safe shelter, no tiger daring to approach within reach of their trunks, the enormous animal being ever ready and eager to kill the royal beast should he make the attempt. The tiger which had just risen, suddenly finding himself hemmed in on all sides, glared around him for an instant. Several shots were discharged at him, some of which taking effect, so maddened the already infuriated brute, that he made a sudden spring upon the back of the elephant on which sat the musicians, and bit at the principal performer, who was nearest the croup. The poor man naturally shrank back. The tiger, however, caught his foot, and tore off a considerable portion of it; then, darting into the jungle, and despite of a volley fired at him, succeeded in gaining the thick covert, from which for some time we vainly attempted to dislodge him.

Finding all other means fail, we at length sent in the elephant that carried the fireworks, and began to throw them lighted into the reeds and brushwood, in order to frighten the tiger from his hiding-place. Presently, to our great horror, the jungle took fire. The *mohut* in vain urged the elephant, by goading him, to leave the spot. Alarmed by the flames, he stood perfectly still—nothing could induce him to move. The *mohut*, therefore, and those on his back, were fain to slip down, and, risking even a rencontre with the tiger, make their way out of the now burning cover. This they did in safety.

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Never in my life did I look upon a more magnificent sight than the conflagration now before me. Disturbed by the fire, animals of every kind, serpents of every hue, burst from the burning jungle. The cries of lesser creatures, mingled with the roar of the affrighted elephant, struck awe into our hearts. The flames were high; the whole country before us presented one mass of fire. Nothing could exceed the grandeur of the scene. Standing on the plain hard by, secure from the danger, we looked on in silent astonishment and admiration.

Presently a louder roar was heard, and the elephant dashed out of the fire. He had evidently been severely burnt. The pads and trappings on his back were in flames, burning and rankling into his flesh; the iron girths were actually red-hot, eating into his sides. He was roaring with agony, and ran bounding along the open space, his trunk elevated, lashing his back with his disproportioned tail. Screaming, mad with torture, in vain we attempted to pursue him or close him in. Pain had driven him mad; and as the huge animal galloped forward, the wind, acting on the flames, caused them to devour still quicker his thick flesh. His mingled roars and cries I can never forget. At length, dashing into a *nullah*, he instantly cooled the iron chains, which fizzed in the water, and, in returning once more to their natural colour, added one more pang to the wretched animal. We now attempted to offer him succour; but it was too late. The elephant dived; the fire was extinguished; but as he came up he turned on his side, and with one convulsive roar expired.

We now proceeded to return home. The whole way the cries of the poor musician were occasionally heard. His pain

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was intolerable. He was but too well aware of his doom. There is a venom in the bite of a tiger almost always fatal. So, alas! it turned out in this man's case. He died within eight-and-forty hours.

Our breakfast party again assembled at dinner; but, alas! much of their gaiety was gone. The tiger-hunt was anything but a subject of congratulation. Jameson had lost one of his best and most faithful *mohuts;* one of the most valuable elephants had been burnt to death; the principal musician in the resident's service was now dying.

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THE SIRDAR.

I RECEIVED a letter addressed to me at Calcutta from a friend at Berhampore, stating that several robberies had taken place in my household during my absence, and that my sirdar-bearer, on whom I could rely, had begged of my friend to write to me to return as soon as possible.

This information reached me as I lay on my couch, completely worn with the fatigues of the previous day; for I had been with some brother officers to Barrackpore to see a hunt by leopards, a sight the most curious that I ever beheld in India. These animals are so tame that they range at large, and actually sleep beside their keeper. This I can vouch for, as I have seen it. They protect him with the same fidelity that a dog would defend his master if any stranger should approach him during his slumbers. This I particularly know, as I unfortunately went to awake him, unaware of his faithful guardians, and nearly paid the penalty of my folly. The keeper, however, started up and called them off. They obeyed with the docility of domestic animals, and fell behind him at his word of command. They belong, I believe, to the Governor-General for the time being, and are kept in the park of the Government House. It was here that I saw them run down a deer. Never in my life have I beheld anything so graceful as their movements, or so rapid as their speed. Considerably swifter than greyhounds they bounded along, and soon brought down their game. Fatigued

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with the excitement of this beautiful sport, I returned to Calcutta, and, as I have mentioned, was lying on my couch when the information conveyed by my friend at Berhampore arrived. No time, however, was to be lost, so, starting up, I ordered my palanquin to be brought to the door, determined on travelling up the one hundred and sixteen miles by bearers. This mode of proceeding may appear strange to Europeans, who will scarcely believe the rapidity with which such a journey is accomplished. By the river, on account of the current, seven days are required to arrive at Berhampore; by land it only takes twenty-eight hours. The bearers, like post-horses, are relieved every twelve or fifteen miles. Each relay consists of eight men, who shift the burden to each other at the end of about every league. The others trot alongside to rest themselves, the whole party singing and jolting on at the rate of about four miles and a half an hour. During the night the disengaged bearers carry torches to scare away the wild beasts. The fire-flies buzzing about like innumerable stars add to the beauty of the picture, and render this scene most romantic and picturesque; though I must confess the uneasy motion, the broiling of the sun in this luxurious, coffin-like conveyance, and the fear of a voracious tiger or other savage monster, take away, in my opinion, all the charms which would otherwise gild this mode of travelling.

At daybreak on the second morning (for I had halted a few hours at Aghardeep) I arrived in the cantonments, and entered my house, which stood in the extensive barrack-square.

After breakfasting most luxuriously on Bombay ducks

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(a small salt fish, something like the European caplin), the sable fish (closely resembling our salmon), and snipes, which are here far more plentiful than sparrows in England, I secretly sent for the WISE MAN of the place to come and discover the thief; then, ordering the servants to fall in in a row under the verandah, I quietly and confidently awaited his arrival. I had often seen his powers tested, and never knew them fail. I am aware that my countrymen will smile at my credulity, but, as I have the conviction from personal and constant observation, I do not hesitate to assert that his manner of discovering crime, though the simplest, was the most wonderful that I ever beheld. The present instance served to strengthen my belief.

In every bazaar or village in India there exists a *wise man*, a sort of half priest, half conjuror, who predicts events, tells fortunes, secures families, and discovers crimes. These individuals are looked upon with great awe by the natives, and are often found useful in the last instance by Europeans.

On the arrival of the magician he made the men form a circle round him; then, uttering some prayers, he produced a small bag of rice, and, taking out a handful, gave it to the man nearest to him, and desired him to chew it, while he continued to recite certain prayers or incantations. In a moment or two he held a plate to the man, and desired him to spit out the grain. He did so; it was well chewed, and the man instantly declared innocent. Another and another succeeded. At length he came to one of my favourite servants—one whom I never suspected. On taking the rice the man seemed dreadfully convulsed. He ground his teeth, and worked hard to masticate it, but all in vain. When he

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rendered it on the plate the grain was uncrushed, unchewed. The WISE MAN instantly proclaimed him to be the thief, upon which the servant, falling on his knees, confessed the crime, and detailed a series of thefts for which I had suspected and even punished others. By his own showing he must have been the greatest rascal, the greatest scoundrel alive. He had, however, lived long with me so I contented myself with instantly dismissing him.

In the evening I was sitting at whist when I was called out by my sirdar-bearer, whom I before mentioned as one of the most faithful creatures in existence. He begged of me instantly to set out for Moorshedabad, a distance of about ten miles, in order to see a cousin of mine, who had sent me a verbal message by a *peon* (a foot-runner), requesting my instant attendance, as he had met with a serious accident. When I asked to see the servant I found he was already gone, and when I expressed my astonishment that he had not even sent me a *chit* (note), my bearer assured me the accident had deprived him of the power of writing, but that he earnestly solicited me to lose no time in setting out. Of course I did not hesitate ordering my palanquin out once more. Though sadly tired, I started off, after making an apology to my friends for thus abruptly leaving them. On my arrival at Moorshedabad I hurried to the bungalow of my relative. Here I found all the world fast asleep; and, amongst others, my cousin. He was perfectly well, and slumbering most comfortably. On being awoke he positively denied having sent any messenger whatever to me, and had met with no accident, nor was ever better in his life.

The deception thus practised on me staggered me so much

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that, in spite of every remonstrance, I borrowed a relay of bearers, and set out on my instant return home.

On re-entering my quarter I found all quiet and still as the grave. I aroused some of the sleeping servants; and, having obtained a light, asked for the sirdar-bearer, determined to make an example of the rascal for having thus played off a practical joke on me. None of the others, however, knew where he was; so I proceeded to my bedroom, resolved to punish him in the morning. As I passed through my dressing-room I perceived my drawers open; I examined them, and found that a suit of my clothes had been extracted; and, by a turban I found lying near, I discovered that they had been taken by the sirdar. That a man whom I had hitherto looked upon as incorruptibly honest should thus act was a matter of the greatest surprise; that one who had ever been considered as the most faithful of my servants should thus suddenly turn thief, annoyed and disappointed me; but what puzzled me more than all was that my people declared he had been seen to enter this room early in the evening, but most positively had not passed out again. Tired with conjecture I went into my sleeping apartment.

I started back with surprise. Upon the bed lay a figure, the very counterpart of myself! My heart misgave me as I rushed forward, and tore a handkerchief from the features of my other self, who so closely resembled me, as he appeared stretched on my bed, that my followers kept staring first at me, and then at the figure before them, as if doubtful of my identity.

As the covering was removed I perceived the countenance of my sirdar. He was fast asleep. I attempted in anger to

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awake him. He was a corpse. Stone dead before me was stretched my late favourite servant. On a close examination I found a sharp-pointed instrument (probably poisoned) thrust into his heart, from which it was still undrawn. I could not decipher the dreadful mystery.

Presently one of my khitmutgars rushed up. He held a leaf in his hand, on which some characters in Hindostanee had been traced, as usual, with a pin. I sent for my *moonshee* (interpreter), who thus translated them;—"Beloved master, a plot was formed by the man whom you this day discovered to be a thief to murder you. It was too well planned for you to escape. I was too solemnly sworn to dare to reveal it to you. Pardon me, beloved master, but I ventured to deceive you. I took your place, and have felt happy to die for you. May the God of the white man make you happy!"

The riddle was solved. The delinquent, thinking he had completed his deed of blood, had fled. I provided for the family of my attached servant. Not one of his fellows, however, seemed astonished at the act. They appeared to look upon such devotion as a matter of course. For myself, I never can, I never will, forget the fidelity of my devoted sirdar.

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PLEASURES OF A TRIP IN A BUDGEROW.

When I first embarked on board my budgerow near Calcutta, *en route* for Berhampore to join my regiment, I could not help feeling the superiority of this mode of travelling over the less luxurious conveyances of Europe. It is true that it is not expeditious (I expected to be eight days performing a journey which might be accomplished by a "yellow post-chaise" in about twelve hours); but, on the other hand, I found that my splendid barge contained a good sitting-room, large enough for eight persons to dine in with comfort, an excellent bedroom, and above these a half-deck, where, after sunset, I could sit and enjoy my hookah. The river up which I was travelling was broad, its banks were picturesque, and provisions plentiful. I was not even to be annoyed by the smell of cookery or the presence of any supernumerary servants; they had a separate boat, which followed at a respectful distance. In a word, I discovered the vast difference, as far as living goes, between an ensign in the service of the Honourable the Company of Merchants trading to the East Indies, and an officer of the same rank struggling to keep up the appearance of a gentleman in one of his (or her) Majesty's corps in Great Britain.

A couple of military friends quartered at Barrackpore accompanied me as far as that beautiful spot, some fifteen miles from the capital, where we arrived late on the first evening. Never had I passed a more delightful day. We

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had partaken of an excellent tiffin and dinner, played half a dozen rubbers of dummy whist, and smoked our pipes *al fresco*, met several of our friends going up and down the river, talked of Europe, made several bets, speculated about promotion, drank several bottles of Carbonell's claret, and enjoyed ourselves to the very *acmé* of every Indian luxury.

Arrived at our destination we landed, and, passing through the parklike grounds of the Government House, went to a tent, under which a grand *nautch* was to be held. Here we saw several half-naked black girls twisting about on one foot, with one of their arms raised in the air, while others sat by singing a lugubrious tune through their noses, accompanying themselves on a hand-drum. An overpowering smell of attar of roses and cajeput oil turned me perfectly sick; so I left almost immediately (to the great surprise of my brother officers, who were in ecstasies, and could not manage to understand how I could feel otherwise than pleased at these wretched twistings of an ebony Venus), and returned to my budgerow, where I slept soundly.

My second day's journey was not quite so delightful as my first. We began to lose sight of all human habitations; the flat country was sadly monotonous, and I began to suspect that my admiration for this splendid style of travelling was already diminishing. This day we only proceeded ten miles. The *dandies* (native boatmen) were forced to jump into the water more than once during the day to get the boat off some sand-bank, and they tracked oftener and farther than they rowed. My dinner was perhaps as good as that of the day before; but I really began to be sick of chickens, and my *khansumah* (purveyor) seemed determined to give me nothing

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else. The glare of the water hurt my eyes, the musquitoes were more troublesome than ever, so I went to bed early.

The great curse of going to bed early is the probable chance of awaking proportionably soon in the morning. I was sitting up in my bed; sleep had flown from me before four o'clock next morning, so I heartily repented having retired at such an unconscionable hour; but, as that availed me nothing, I got up, although I saw a terribly long day before me. The boat was still *luggaoed* (moored); for I ought to have informed my reader that at sunset the budgerow is directed up to the bank, and there made fast by a rope to a staple driven in the ground. The dandies then cook their night meal, finish it, and, strewing themselves over different parts of the vessel, cover their faces with a cloth, and on the bare planks, beneath the powerful rays of the moon (which in India are more potent, and supposed to be far more dangerous than those of the sun), sleep through the night. The boat is freed at about five in the morning, to recommence its wearying progress.

As I said before, I was up and dressed before the hour of starting. My breakfast hour was eight—till then what should I do? How should I pass my time? While I was deliberating I happened to cast my eyes on my fowling-piece, which stood in the corner. The morning was cool, the country around open and promising; I therefore determined on shooting for a couple of hours. In accordance with this resolve I desired one of my khitmutgars, and a bearer with a *chattah* (a large umbrella), in case of extreme heat, to accompany me, ordered the boat to meet us at a point about a mile and a half off, and jumped ashore, quite pleased with the

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discovery I had just made of how to kill time before breakfast.

I had very indifferent sport; indeed, I may almost say I had none, for I saw nothing to shoot at save a few wretched *paddy* birds; and therefore, after an hour's wandering about, I determined on returning to my boat, and crossed a wide field to do so, in which I saw some animals grazing. No sooner had I entered it than a sleek-looking *Brahmin* bull immediately singled me out as the object of his attack. Now, though they are smaller than a similar animal in Europe, they are far more savage, far more active, and, were it not for a hump they have on their shoulders, a handsomer beast than the English bull. In India they are held sacred. To slaughter one would be to commit a crime; to wound or maim one wantonly is punishable by law; to attempt to combat one would be sure destruction. I therefore saw the approach of my enemy with no inconsiderable feeling of terror. As my bearer carried a second gun, and there were three of us to one, I thought it but fair to stand my ground; so, pointing steadily at him as he came up, I fired at him from the barrel in which I had placed a ball, and hit him close to the shoulder, which made him pause for an instant; then, turning round, I looked for the man who carried my other gun, but, alas! he had fled. On seeing me fire at the holy beast he had not hesitated, but, throwing down the fowling-piece, had run away as swiftly as his legs would carry him. Before I again turned my face towards the enraged quadruped he had recovered the shock, and was again coming full on me. His nostrils were dilated with anger and pain, the foam flew from his mouth as he tossed his head about, he

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lashed his sides with his tail, and ploughed up the ground as he came tearing on. I had no time to reload, no time for deliberation. I quitted my gun, and flew for my very life towards the spot where I had ordered my budgerow to meet me. I did not dare to turn round, but I could hear the furious beast close behind me. Every instant brought him nearer. He was within a dozen paces of me when my hat flew off. To that trivial circumstance I owe my life. The bull stopped for an instant in his full career to trample on it. Finding it, however, an inanimate object, he again started off in pursuit of me. There were now about a hundred paces between us. I need not say how I exerted myself, my very existence depending on my speed. The animal, in spite of all my efforts, gained on me. At length I doubled the corner where I expected to find my boat. It had not arrived. I looked on the broad stream—not a vessel was to be seen. I cast a glance around me—not a soul was visible; no living object broke the quiet of the scene save the infuriated monster, that now came up more quickly than ever. I already began to pant with fatigue. My last hope, my last chance was gone. The agony of that moment I can never forget—to describe it would be impossible.

I saw but one course before me, and that was almost as full of danger as my present position; yet it presented a less painful, though, perhaps, as sure a doom. I was unable to swim; the river was deep and rapid, and filled with alligators. The chances were a thousand to one that I was either drowned or destroyed by these monsters if I plunged in; but even that was better than being gored and trampled to death. In a single thought I commended my soul to its Creator, and

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plunged in. As I did so I thought I heard a sudden report, which mingled with the gush of waters as I instantly sank. In the next moment I rose. As I did so I was suddenly laid hold of, and dragged into a boat, with no other harm than a severe ducking. I was safe—I was saved.

The budgerow had grounded on a sand-bank, and, being unable to proceed, they had sent forward a portion of the boat's crew in a light canoe. It had just turned the point as I leaped into the stream, and I was miraculously picked up in the very nick of time. After uttering a prayer of thanksgiving for my escape I looked round. The bull was still pacing up and down the bank, apparently half inclined to pursue me even into the water. I looked with terror at him. He was severely wounded, and evidently unable to live. He was fast bleeding to death; but this fact, instead of decreasing his rage, seemed to add strength to it: he tore up the earth around him, and kept pacing about in agonies of pain and anger.

I never felt more happy than when I re-entered my budgerow. The fright had altogether robbed me of appetite for my breakfast. This I was annoyed at, as I wished to be looked upon as a man of courage by my followers; but then, again, I rightly argued that a Brahmin bull was a most unfair foe. The two servants who had fled I never saw again. On passing the spot in my barge where I had left my antagonist I saw him lying down in the last agonies of expiring life. One of my people soon after went ashore, and recovered my English guns, which were both, however, injured by being thrown down. That night I slept most uneasily, and began to dislike travelling by water. The next morning I was disturbed from my slumbers by a loud and

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angry colloquy between my crew and a number of persons who stood jabbering away on the bank of the river. I instantly went out, and found a crowd of natives, accompanied by some of their strange-looking provincial guards, with shields and rusty arms, yet half naked and barefoot, clamorously calling for my presence. It appeared, as soon as I was able to make out the case, that, in the first place, the people were dreadfully irate at my having killed a sacred bull, and, in the second, the owner of the said animal insisted on my making good to him the price of the brute I had destroyed, and, until the matter was settled, they positively refused to let my boatmen unmoor the budgerow. A conflict with these people, even had I been sure of victory, would have brought me into much trouble and annoyance, so I philosophically determined on giving them the sum demanded; though I confess I did so grumbling all the time at thus paying for being nearly killed. The case was, however, clear. I had no right to trespass, and if I had not trespassed I should not have been attacked by the bull, so I handed them the amount, and was suffered to proceed on my voyage.

I was annoyed all day by the constant sight of dead bodies floating down the stream. Every now and then one of these grim objects would bump against the boat, and, when I looked out to see the cause, I frequently beheld objects so sickening to view—corpses mutilated by birds of prey and carnivorous fish, and decomposed—that I drew in my head with horror and disgust. I found two scorpions in my cabin. One of my dandies broke his leg. I never spent a more unpleasant day. I forgot, moreover, to put down my gauze

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curtains that night, and consequently was almost bitten to death by musquitoes.

When I was sitting on the deck next morning, smoking my hookah, with a *chattah* over my head, I saw at a short distance a wild duck swimming about in the water near a large bed of rushes. I sent for my gun, and was about to fire at it, when I found that it was an Indian fowler, who, ensconced in an artificial and movable bunch of rushes, was sitting in the river with his decoy duck to draw others near him; but, as he had no weapon, I was anxious to know how, when the game was within a proper range, he would be able to destroy it. This I soon learnt. As soon as a flight of wild ducks settles in the river he pops a large jar (called in India a *kedgeree* pot) or a gourd over his head, and, entering the river considerably above, manages to swim or float uprightly down with the stream. The ducks see nothing but the gourd or jar coming down, and unsuspectingly remain where they are, and allow the wary Indian to get in amongst them; he drags them down one by one, and fixes them in his girdle, continuing to do so till some unlucky accident betrays him, when he shifts his quarters, and re-enacts the same scene elsewhere.

In the evening I went to take a stroll on the shore, which was sandy; and, as there was a village near, I had no fear of being attacked by bulls or other wild animals. After walking for some time, and taking up several of the skulls which lay scattered about, I heard the assurance of a native that the jagged joining of the upper and lower parts was nothing more nor less than the predestination of the man, written by the finger of his Maker on his pericranium before he is sent

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into this world. I found that my shoe-string had become undone, and was about to place my foot on a log of wood which lay just in front of me for the purpose of tying it, when, lo! the apparent log suddenly started up and plunged into the river. It was an enormous alligator that I had disturbed—a monster with whom, had he attacked me, I could never have been able to cope. My very blood ran cold. I hastily got back to my budgerow, from which I firmly vowed I would not again move till I arrived at Berhampore.

I was about to retire to my couch when I perceived a light on shore. I went on deck, and found that it proceeded from a bonfire, on which some natives were burning a dead body. I instantly made my people undo the vessel, and proceed a mile higher up the river. Here I was again annoyed by precisely the same occurrence. I afterwards found that I was almost sure to be subjected to the same thing if I persevered in my wish to make fast my budgerow in the neighbourhood of a native village.

On the following night my head boatman was very particular about choosing a place for mooring. On inquiry I found that the greatest danger might be apprehended if he made the slightest mistake, as it was just at that period of the moon's age when a "bore" might be expected. Though somewhat alarmed at this intelligence, I was rather pleased at having an opportunity of witnessing this strange phenomenon. As the man had foretold, at ten o'clock it came on. For miles before it reached us I could hear the roar of the wave as it plunged down the edge of the river, destroying everything in its course; for I must inform my reader that the bore is a dreadful wave, of some ten or twelve feet high, which at certain

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periods regularly surges down one of the banks of the river, crosses at particular points, travelling its exact, its invariable course; which is so well known, that a skilful and practised dandy may always manage to avoid it. My pilot unfortunately anchored a little too near a spot where it crossed; so that, though not actually in it, we caught the swell at a short distance. The boat lurched over, and I was thrown down. By this accident I received such a severe blow on my head that I was for a time deprived of consciousness. On the following morning I arrived at Berhampore, thoroughly sick of the river and its barges.

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THE ENGLISH SOLDIER AND THE SEPOY.

It was my fate, soon after joining my regiment stationed at Berhampore, to be ordered to attend, as supernumerary officer, several courts-martial about to be held in the cantonment. The first was on a soldier of the 17th foot, who had stabbed his sergeant and fired at his captain, besides committing other crimes, less heinous, perhaps, in a moral point of view, but almost equally heavy according to martial law. The first charge, however, seemed so grave as to require a signal example. The man, therefore, had been some twelve months before delivered over to the civil power, who, after keeping him during that period, declared their incompetence to try him, and sent him back to his regiment, to be dealt with by a general court-martial.

Before these judges I saw him arraigned and convicted. Every one supposed that he would have been condemned to death; but his long imprisonment, the manner in which he had been sent about from one place to another, weighed in his favour. He was sentenced to receive nine hundred and ninety-nine lashes, and on his recovery from that punishment to be sent to a hill fort to work for five years as a convict. Far from feeling any horror at this decision, he merely smiled, and, with an impudent sneer, thanked the court for their mild punishment, and left the room laughing at the tortures they proposed to inflict on him.

I saw this sentence carried into effect. I saw the man

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(whose name, as well as I can recollect, was Geary) receive nine hundred lashes without uttering a single groan. At the end of that time the surgeon ordered him to be taken down. He was almost insensible; his back was one mass of coagulated blood; every lash had told. The linen he had held in his mouth was bitten through and through, yet not a cry of anguish had escaped him. On some water being given him he rather revived, and, looking round, fixed his eyes upon his captain, who had reluctantly been his prosecutor. With difficulty pushing off the men who supported him, he shook his clenched fist at that officer, and, with an oath of future vengeance, left the ground, cursing his superiors, and uttering everything insolent which he could bring to mind. What became of him after the completion of his punishment I know not. Thank heaven, I had left India.

A few days subsequently I attended a garrison court-martial held on a wretched sepoy who had stolen an invalid's dress from the hospital when on sentry. The crime was heavy, and so unusual amongst the native army that the circumstance created much interest amongst us. The native witnesses took their oaths by holding in their right hand a small jar filled with some water of the Ganges, uttering a vow at the same time. Their evidence was clear. The prisoner admitted his guilt, and, as the act was infamous, so it was determined that the award should be severe. To my surprise the following morning, when the proceedings were read out at the head of the regiment, I found the only punishment to be inflicted on him was "an ignominious dismissal from the service." His facings were instantly cut off, and he was drummed out of our lines accordingly. Naturally astonished at the seeming leniency

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of the sentence, I could not help adverting to it on my return to our mess-room, when I was told by an adjutant that the punishment I had just seen was almost equal to the infliction of death. He then explained that the man was born, according to his religious caste, to be a soldier; as a soldier he must live, as a soldier he must die. Turned out from that profession, his wife, his children, his parents, and his friends must all instantly disown him. No ties, no kindness could now be relied on. As a pariah dog or a beast of prey he would be shunned by every good Mussulman and Hindoo. He was cut off for ever from his family and his God, to wander miserably an outcast in this world, without hope of pardon in the next. In a word, he had lost his caste, and consequently his every joy and hope.

I confess I hoped that the statement was somewhat overdrawn—was exaggerated. Before many weeks I unfortunately ascertained it to be but too true. The body of the unhappy ex-sepoy was found amidst some low jungle which grew close by his former home, the military lines. He had here crept, and, in sight of his wife and children, without their knowledge, had died of actual misery and starvation.

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NOVEL REVENGE.

A CURIOUS feeling with regard to retaliation, or rather revenge, exists among the tribes in India. These people believe that it is a far more severe punishment to the person who has injured them to ruin their fate hereafter than to inflict any evil on them in this world. I will here give a short sketch of a scene, for the truth of which I can vouch. Major Tomlinson was an officer of high reputation in the army, and also an acting magistrate in the district where he was quartered. Like many others in the "good old times," he held a military and civil commission together, not temporarily, but continually. Indeed, to a stranger arriving in India, unaware of the habit being general, it seemed most strange indeed to see alternate gazettes announcing his military promotions and civil changes; but as the service was never carried on better, or the offices discharged with more zeal than at the period I allude to, it was rather a matter of opinion than regret.

Major Tomlinson was appointed collector not a hundred miles from Poonah. He was selected for the post as an active and zealous young man, who would carry the orders of government into instant effect; and, as these orders strictly enjoined him to be unremitting in his endeavours to bring the defaulter whose arrears had been long accumulating to instant settlement, it may be confidently asserted that the

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situation in which he was placed was anything but a bed of roses.

Taking a tour round his district he personally inquired into each case, and, amongst others, ordered a native named Jesserie Synd instantly to pay up the debt he owed to government. Jesserie of course pleaded poverty, declared his total inability to liquidate the debt, and threw himself on the compassion and mercy of the collector. A young hand would have been deceived by the apparent despair of the supplicant. Tomlinson, however, was too old a soldier to be thus duped, so he ordered the man either to surrender himself as a prisoner or instantly to pay down the money. The wily Indian saw that the European was not to be deceived; so, with a look of foiled hypocrisy and malice, he instantly counted down the number of rupees required, and, with many a salaam, followed the collector to the end of his village, whence, as soon as he was out of hearing, he poured out on him a volley of maledictions beyond the power of an Englishman's pen to transcribe.

The following year Major Tomlinson held a court, to which the natives were desired to come, in order to receive, as far as I can recollect, some government order, or it might have been to pay their dues. The fact is of little consequence; suffice it to say, they were ordered to attend, and they did so accordingly.

The collector was sitting in his verandah, his secretary and assistant, with several of his household, around him, when, amongst those who presented themselves before him, Jesserie Synd appeared, bearing his infant child in his arms. The

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major had wholly forgotten him, and the manner in which he had been compelled to enforce the payment of his arrears; nor would he now have recognised him had he not boldly advanced to the foot of the stone steps, at the top of which the collector was sitting, as I before stated, hearing and adjudging the several cases that came before him.

"Do you remember me, sahib?" demanded the native, salaaming to the ground. "Does the great Englishman remember the poor Indian who last year was made to pay the long arrears?"

"Surely," replied Tomlinson.

"I am he, worthy collector, I am he who had his every *pice*" (a small coin) "taken from him, when the child which he now bears in his arms and his old father were almost starving. I am he who at that moment made a vow to the gods of his fathers that he would live to be revenged on the destroyer of his fortune and his happiness, and thus I accomplish my oath."

The collector started up, fancying the man was about to assault him. He, on the other hand, calmly stepping one pace back, suddenly raised his child high above his head, and, seizing it by its ankle, in the next instant dashed out its brains on the step before which he was standing. Then, turning to the horrified magistrate, he calmly added, "Behold my act of retaliation! The child that lies dead before you was my only one, my adored one. I have destroyed it—I have sacrificed it to the god of vengeance, and its precious blood be on *your* head! *You* are its murderer; I have killed it in *your* name. It is even now in the valley of death,

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calling for revenge on *you*, who are its real assassin. Had I possessed anything more dear I would have sacrificed it in the same way to secure the punishments which *must* await you. My revenge is now complete."

The wretched fanatic was instantly seized, and shortly afterwards tried. Far from attempting to palliate his offence, he loudly gloried in it; far from speaking of it as a rash act, committed in a moment of temporary insanity, he not only admitted the fact, but coolly argued on the justice of it, adding that, if he escaped from his present doom, he would immolate other victims to secure a future vengeance on his enemy. The man was consequently tried, convicted, and executed.

A few days after this a person called at the collector's office to claim his fee as executioner, for having carried the late sentence of the law into effect. The money was paid to him, and he was about to depart, when Major Tomlinson happened, as a mere matter of curiosity, to ask his name. Imagine his surprise when he found it the same as that of the malefactor himself. The coincidence struck him as strange.

"Are you any relation of the deceased?"

"I am his father, sahib."

"And you hanged your own son?"

"What could I do, sahib? It was my son's fate. Had I not performed the last duties towards him some one else would; and, as we were already poor, it would have been a pity that any one else should have profited by our misfortune."

"And did you feel no compunction, no sorrow about the act?"

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"Sahib, it was my child's fate; he was born to it—he has fulfilled it. Why, then, should his father repent?" And, with a low salaam and many thanks for his fee, the executioner of his own son contentedly left the presence of the astonished collector.

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INDIAN JEALOUSY.

"Your European news seems at once to surprise and please you," said a young native girl to her patron, an English gentleman, who had laid down his hookah after breakfast, and was reading with avidity a parcel of letters he had just received from his mother-country. "Tell me, Charles, what are they about?"

After a moment's pause the Briton folded up the communication he had just been reading, and, with a sad expression, fixed his eyes on the female who addressed him.

"Alas, my love! they contain bad news for you."

The poor girl started up and burst into tears, at the same time throwing her well-made arms round the neck of him to whom she was attached. To explain their relative positions would be unnecessary. It will be sufficient to say that she was one of the loveliest beings, if loveliness can lurk beneath a dingy skin, that ever was seen. Charles Temple was a married man, whose wife had left him some ten years before for Europe, in order to bring up her children. Blame him if you will. To have formed such a connection as that alluded to was palpably wrong; but, alas! the examples around, the absence of his wife during a series of years, the certainty that the *liaison* could at most be but temporary, pleaded with those about him as an excuse. Without, however, seeking to palliate an evidently criminal practice, I

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shall confine myself to the mere circumstances to which this unhappy connection gave rise.

"Do tell me what is the matter," again and again entreated Mary; for, amongst other fancies, Charles had so christened the young Indian. "What do those letters say?"

"My wife is about to return to me."

A thunderbolt would not more suddenly, more fearfully, have stricken the inquirer. For a moment or two she seemed to endeavour to call up tears to her aid, but in vain. Anger and annoyance next swayed her beautiful form as she swang backwards and forwards in mental agony.

"Yes," calmly resumed Temple, "yes, my wife will be here next week. She is already at Madras, and comes round by the first ship. I must instantly go and meet her at Calcutta."

"And what is to become of me?" passionately demanded the wretched woman, throwing herself at his feet, and convulsively seizing his hand.

"Mary, you shall be cared for. Every comfort and happiness which money can secure shall be yours. You shall have everything you want, but we must part."

"Part—part! to please a white face who loves you not? to make way for one who has deserted you during ten long years? Never!"

"My wife has only absented herself for the sake of our children. She now returns, and must be received into my house as the legitimate mistress of it."

"And you tell this coolly to me, who have only lived for you? No, send her away. I will be your slave; I will die for you. See! I am not in joke;" and the frantic girl

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snatched up a knife, which as instantly Temple wrenched from her.

To portray further this scene is unnecessary. It is only needed to add that a more heart-rending one never was beheld. Charles, however, was firm, and the only boon he granted to Mary was, that she should live in a bungalow on the grounds, and that his wife should never know who she was. This seemed to pacify her, and Temple started off for Calcutta.

Some weeks after the foregoing scene Mrs. Temple was strolling one evening through her grounds, once more domesticated and perfectly happy in Bengal, when she chanced to pass a bungalow presenting a far neater appearance than the generality of such habitations usually exhibit. Having, without success, endeavoured to learn the name of its proprietor, she determined on entering it. She was welcomed by a beautiful young woman, whose agitation on beholding her Mrs. Temple naturally ascribed to Indian timidity. The girl was evidently taken by surprise, and felt the high honour done her; yet there was no servility in her manner, no awkwardness in the way in which she solicited her mistress (of course it was palpable to Mrs. Temple that she was of the household, connected, probably, with some of the male attendants) to sit down and refresh herself. Pleased with the spot and its beautiful owner, she determined on revisiting the bungalow, and expressed herself to that effect, stating that she would send down some fruit and other eatables, of which she would partake the following evening with Mr. Temple in this lovely cottage. The girl for a moment seemed startled; then, suddenly appealing to her, besought her not to tell her

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husband that she had been there, and declined most respectfully receiving him, as she had made a vow no male should ever enter beneath her roof.

"Well, then," rejoined Mrs. Temple, "as such is your determination, I will not bring him, nor even tell him of my discovery; but I suppose I may come myself?"

The girl eagerly acceded to the lady's wish, and they parted excellent friends.

Late on the following evening Mrs. Temple returned to her mansion far from well, and hastened to seek her couch. Her husband was called from a party of friends to see her, since she hourly grew worse. The most racking pains began to assail her. She felt that she was dangerously ill. A surgeon was sent for, who declared the sufferer to be in imminent danger. She had probably swallowed some poisonous berry or root, for the symptoms were those of deadly poison. The lady heard this, and desired the chamber to be cleared. When alone with her husband she was about to explain to him her visit of the evening. She had already begun her narrative, when suddenly the door was thrown open, and in rushed the lovely girl, in whom our readers will have already recognised Mary.

"I have come, Charles," cried the unfortunate female, "to see you suffer. Think you I could outlive your love, and see another possess that affection I once so fondly imagined my own? No! Such moderation was not in my power. I avoided the temptation to do ill, and shut myself up from the sight of every one. Fate, however, led your wife to my cottage. I would there have avoided her; but she forced herself upon me. Yes, impelled by her *nusseed*, she again sought me, and tempted me by an opportunity too palpably

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placed before me by the gods of my fathers to resist. I poisoned her. Nothing can now save her. In half an hour she will be a corpse. You may start, and seem to doubt me; but, by the heaven of the Christians, it is true. And now you would menace me I see; but your anger comes too late. I cannot survive your wife many moments. I do not cry as the pale-faced one does. I do not groan; yet the same pains now tear my frame. The poisoned fruit she left I swallowed. Ah! ah! ah! You thought, because my complexion was dark, I could not feel. You cast me off to die in misery. Who triumphs now?"

I will not further dwell on the dreadful scene. Within one hour Temple sat between the corpses of his wife and his mistress. The matter was hushed up. Suspicion, it is true, directed her glance that way; yet the whole truth was never known. The wretched man, whose grey hairs and precocious old age speak a youth of sorrow, point out to the passer-by the once gay and handsome Charles Temple.

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THE CENTIPEDE.

PERHAPS the roughest sea that can be conceived is that which dances about the Bay of Bengal during eight months in every twelve. I more particularly allude to that portion called the Sandheads, a portion so dangerous that every ship is forced to take on board a commissioned pilot, in order to avoid the numerous shoals which surround the entrance to the river, up which the vessel must ascend to reach Calcutta.

The first land which greets the sight of the wearied voyager is the island of Saugor, a green, fresh-looking spot, a sort of oasis in the desert of waters, serving to enchant the sight of him who has been boxed up during several successive months on board a slow-sailing East Indiaman. Off this island ships frequently cast anchor. The "Dundee Castle" did so some years ago.

Amongst other cadets on board the vessel I have named none was better liked than Jemmy Seabright. He was always ready to join in a "lark" or an act of charity, continually doing his best to chalk out amusement for his fellow passengers, and ever ready to pay the expenses incurred on these occasions. No wonder, then, that he was generally liked.

When the "Dundee Castle" had let down her ponderous anchor and furled her clumsy sails Master Jemmy began to look about, in order to see how he should amuse himself till she again got under weigh, a period, probably, of twenty-four

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hours at least. Jemmy had read in his youth the history of the unfortunate Munroe, whose head was taken off by a tiger on the very island close to which they were now lying; so he at once proposed to make up a party to visit the spot, taking care, however, to select as his companions young men of activity and courage. These, well armed at all points, jumped into the boat, and soon reached their destination.

The island, which had appeared such a lovely spot at a distance, proved on nearer inspection to be a low, swampy place, overgrown with brushwood. The very few natives who inhabited it described the woods to be full of tigers, the bushes alive with snakes and centipedes, and the air replete with noxious pestilence. Such a description was anything but prepossessing; yet the party were all young men, and, as they came for pleasure, pleasure they were determined to have, in spite of reptiles or disease. Taking care to keep as far from the edge of the jungle as possible, the happy group went on, occasionally bringing down a squirrel or a bird, till they reached the spot where poor Munroe met his death. Here they sat down, and actually partook of their morning meal, imitating in the closest manner the very positions which the hunter's party had taken up on that unfortunate day, shouting at the same time defiance to the wild beasts, calling on the most ferocious animals of the woods to come forth and meet their fate.

During this foolish gasconade a sudden roar was heard. Every one started up. The echoes died away, but no tiger made his appearance; and perhaps it was very fortunate for the youths that he did not, for, to confess the honest truth, they were all so startled that many in their haste had forgotten

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to take up the guns which lay beside them. In the scramble poor Jemmy had severely sprained his ankle. This was indeed a misfortune. Two of his companions, however, good-naturedly raised him in their arms, and carried him down to the place where the boat lay waiting for them. There were two men in it, so under their care poor Seabright was left, lying upon a green bank close to the sea, while his associates continued their ramble through the island. Unchequered by a single event that might be construed into an adventure, the tired youngsters, after a stroll of a couple of hours, returned to the spot where they had left Jemmy Seabright. The sailors had quitted the boat, probably gone in search of refreshment. Their companion, however, lay stretched at full length, fast asleep under the shade of a thick bush.

"Halt! on your lives stir not!" cried young Sinclair, who was a few paces in advance of the others. "See! look at his throat!"

The party stood aghast: a long black snake had coiled itself round the neck of the youth, that is to say, had thrown its tail round his throat, while its raised head kept playing about within an inch of the unfortunate boy's face.

Jemmy was either fast asleep or dead. For a moment the party hesitated in indecision between two opinions. If the snake had bitten the young man it was more than probable he had expired on the instant, and now lay a corpse before them; if not, he was in a deep slumber, from which, if they suddenly awoke him, he would naturally move, and insure the fatal bite, which possibly might not yet have been inflicted. How to act was indeed a matter most difficult to decide. Presently Seabright stirred his hand. He only moved it in the slightest

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manner; yet it was enough to assure his friends that he was alive, and consequently brought on the question how they were to extricate him from his perilous situation.

A young guinea-pig (a midshipman of the first class on board an East Indiaman is so styled) proposed the only plan likely to succeed. It appeared, indeed, a wild scheme, and little likely to prove availing; but, as every instant of time seemed precious, as the danger of his awaking increased with each moment, the party consented to the proposition. In less time than the last five lines have occupied me in writing them down the jolly reefer had stripped off his shoes, formed a running noose of some very fine whipcord, and mounted the tree which overhung the sleeper. Here he perched himself immediately above the snake, and cautiously and gradually let down the string close to the head of the reptile. A serpent, like a kitten, is always ready to play with any strange object. The creature, on seeing the cord, began to rear its head higher, darting its forked tongue at the flaxen bait. Presently it threw itself forward; its neck was in the noose, which the reefer instantly jerked up. The quick pull alarmed the animal; the knot was not subtle enough to hold the slippery monster; but the sudden shock so terrified it, that in less than the twinkling of an eye the snake had disappeared. The shout the party simultaneously set up awoke poor Seabright, who, unable to rise from the pain in his ankle, sat upright, calling on us for an explanation. This we had begun to afford him, when he suddenly cried out, "No, no, you are deceived; the snake is still here. I feel it in my breast. Here, here it is;" and he thrust his hand into the bosom of his shirt. In the next instant we were around him, imagining that his fear was the effect of

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fancy. He was not far wrong. A centipede, some fourteen inches long, had crept inside his waistcoat during his sleep. The cold feet, the crawling movement of the creature, had made him believe it was a snake. He had grasped at it; the alarmed reptile had buried its hundred feet into Seabright's flesh. To disengage it we had to tear it from its venomous limbs, which remained inserted in the chest of our friend. Two days afterwards we reached Calcutta, where Jemmy obtained the best medical advice. It was, however, nearly three years before he thoroughly recovered from the effects. To this hour Jemmy Seabright almost swoons when he sees even a harmless European scolopendra, or English centipede.

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FREEMASONRY IN INDIA.

The glories of Calcutta are well ushered in by the charms of *Garden* Reach, a spot so perfectly beautiful that the newly arrived Englishman, on passing this part of the river on his voyage from Diamond Harbour to the metropolis, at once begins to believe himself in fairyland. The magnificent stream up which he is sailing is here wide, and, comparatively speaking, clear. The banks on either side, sloping gently down to the water's edge, are covered with the only real verdure I ever saw in Bengal. Flowers and shrubs of every hue peep forth from amongst the foliage, while bungalows of *the* most refined taste stud the sides, and invite the traveller to land, and try a foretaste of Indian hospitality. There was a time, indeed, when every rural habitation of this kind was open to the new comer, and bed, board, and hearty welcome were proffered to every Briton who here arrived. Even though the master of the cottage was away, the servants had *then* orders to receive and wait upon whoever might seek the shelter of these picturesque roofs. Those times have passed away; munificence and reckless expenditure have given place *to* economy and prudence. The style of persons who now seek the shores of Asia has also altered. *Tempora mutantur, et nos mutamur ab illis.* But Garden Reach is still the same as regards its picturesque beauties, and though every bungalow is not now open to the stranger and the wayfarer, the person who travels up by water from the place of anchorage

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to Calcutta will do well to stop here, and partake of the good fare which a very nice hotel proffers. It is to this house that many families go to meet their relatives arriving from England, and hence conduct them to the capital.

Never was I more delighted with the sight of any spot than I was with Garden Reach. I eagerly gave orders to be set on shore, anxious at once to land on the lovely spot, and meet some friends who had written to Madras, telling me to expect them here. As I approached the neat little hotel, so different from our suburban smoking inns at Blackwall and Greenwich, I met a large party escorting an elderly gentleman and a young lady, who seemed to be his daughter, down to a budgerow, which was to convey them to a vessel lower down the river, only awaiting their arrival to sail for Europe. At the water's edge the parting took place, and a more affectionate one I never beheld. The departing friend had been long, apparently, endeared to them; he was evidently highly esteemed by them all. On some of their parchment cheeks I even saw a tear trickle down as they wrung his hand with earnest friendship, and a light drop glistened in many of their eyes as they fervently pronounced "God bless you!" Bowed down more by ill-health than years, their friend hid his face in his handkerchief, and, hurrying his daughter on board the boat, hastened into the cabin to conceal the emotion he felt at thus parting—parting, most likely for ever, from the companions of his youth, the friends of his middle age, to whom he felt endeared by every tie of affection and long acquaintance—about to return to a land which, though once his home, had become desolate to him from the loss of those he loved—about to exchange the warm welcomings of friendship and

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regard for the cold and suspicious salutation of strangers—about to visit the spot where he had left parents and kindred, now numbered with the dead, to recommence life, as it were, and recognise once familiar and dear objects, now the property of strangers, perhaps of enemies;—in a word, to rend every tie he had so happily woven, to burst asunder every link of friendship, and begin life again at an age when sanguine youth no longer lends its energies to overcome difficulties, or bear up against unkindness. Such was the fate of him who now left the shore. Though a stranger I could not help joining in every wish for his future happiness. There was a look of mild resignation, of philanthropic feeling, beaming in his countenance, which at once engaged my best regards.

During tiffin I asked who he was, and found that his name was Robinson. He had been a resident in India during twenty years; but unfortunately, having been more generous than prudent, he had managed to amass but little wealth. He was worth, perhaps, ten thousand pounds, certainly not more. With this he was now returning to Europe, the doctors having declared that a longer sojourn in Asia would endanger his life. Poor, but respected, he therefore left his friends, taking home with him his fortune, invested in indigo; the exchange of the rupee being so low as to compel the Anglo-Indian returning to his native country to remit it in anything rather than in specie. Robinson had not insured his investment, as he was to sail in the same ship with it. I do not remember the name of the vessel, but we will style it the "Dover Castle."

On arriving at the hotel, which was one of the sweetest bungalows I ever entered, commanding a splendid view of the

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river, we found tiffin ready, and the acquaintances of Mr. Robinson waiting to join us in our meal. I soon learnt that these gentlemen were all Freemasons, who had come down thus far to do honour to their friend, who for many years had presided over the lodge in Calcutta; that he had been greatly instrumental in its foundation, and ever attended and benefited it during the twenty years he had spent in India. They not only deplored his departure as a friend, but as a bright and shining luminary in the order of Masonry.

They spoke so highly of their lodge, and were so pressing in their invitation to me, that I consented to dine with them on the following day, and assist in celebrating one of their greatest festivals. Being discovered to be a Mason, a thousand kind offers were made, and many a warm palm proffered to me.

The next evening I was just stepping into my hired palanquin, about to start for Chowringee, where the lodge was held, when a *peon* (a messenger) suddenly arrived, and announced the dreadful intelligence that the "Dover Castle" had been totally wrecked on the dangerous sands near Diamond Harbour, and that, though all the crew and passengers were saved, everything in the shape of freight was utterly and irretrievably lost. "Alas, poor Robinson!" involuntarily ejaculated I; "he is, then, completely ruined;" and, though personally unknown to him, I jogged away to my destination with a heavy heart.

To describe the mysteries, to touch upon the interior of a Mason's *sanctum*, of course, is not my intention; suffice it to say, our labours were followed by the most splendid banquet I ever beheld, and every one seemed happy and elate. As a

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stranger I had not supposed it necessary to tell the news I had heard. I naturally imagined they had also learnt the afflicting tidings. In this, however, I was wrong, for in the evening a *chit* (a note) was brought to the president, who with unaffected emotion read it out loud. It told in a few words the event I had already learnt, and confirmed the suspicion I had that poor Robinson was now penniless, compelled to remain in India at the risk of his life, again to toil for the uncertain chance of living to amass a sufficient competency to return to Europe. A general gloom was evident on every countenance, and many a sigh spontaneously burst forth on hearing the dreadful tale. Presently the countenance of one whom I dare not name suddenly brightened up. A proposition was made, which instantly diffused general pleasure, and called forth long and unanimous applause.

In Europe the fact will seem almost incredible, yet it is strictly true that, within one month from the circumstance I have just mentioned, Robinson sailed with his daughter for England, bearing with him a fortune of *twelve thousand pounds*, the amount of a voluntary subscription created by his warmly-attached brother Masons in Bengal.

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THE SCOFFER'S FATE.

I WAS staying with my friend Mackinnon, the ex-resident at Delhi. He had an extensive bungalow in the vicinity of that city. Here he was wont to resort for the sake of the shooting in the neighbourhood. Myself, Martin, of the native infantry, and a Scotch indigo planter, were his guests. Determined to have some rare sport, we were here assembled, doing tremendous execution amongst the game. Near the cottage of my friend was a very large piece of water. It did not exceed three feet in depth in any part of it; yet, from the vast extent of its surface, it was almost always covered with wild fowl. The rich treat of an early morning's sport led us to embark in the evening on board a small budgerow my friend kept upon it, determining to sit up all night, in order to have a shot at the birds at the first glimmering of daylight. Plenty of loll shrob and other dainties had been sent on board; so, after a few rubbers at whist, we sat down to supper. It may be as well, however, before I relate the incident which occurred, to give a slight portraiture of my three friends.

Mackinnon was one of those characters essentially oriental. I more particularly dwell on his qualities, as they are of an order unknown in Great Britain. On his arrival in Bengal as a writer, European and native bankers had alike flocked round him, offering him any sum or sums he might require. Prudence was never a virtue of poor Mac's. The temptation

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of unlimited credit to a youngster of eighteen would be too much for almost any one; it was certainly too much for Mackinnon.

He recklessly borrowed sums of money, which he determined on paying when he became rich. A few thousand pounds, he naturally considered, could easily be spared from the splendid salaries then paid to officers in the civil service after they had served a few years in India. What, indeed, was six or seven thousand pounds a year? A mere bagatelle; at least so our friend argued, with apparent reason. Mac was a good fellow, the bankers most liberal.

It is a fact worth recording, as a beacon to the unwary, that no individual who has thus commenced has been able subsequently to leave India. For the gratification of his early extravagances he is bound as a prisoner to Asia—there he must live, there he must die. The *schroffs* (the native money-lenders) and the bankers commence charging interest and compound interest against the debtor, whom, fearful of awaking from his dream of bliss, they omit to call upon for the said interest till the sum is so considerable that he is unable to repay it at once. They then tempt him with fresh loans, or rather get friends to do so, in order to pay the arrears of the original lenders, begin to insure his life, and so entangle him in the mazes of debt that they are sure of him as their victim all the days of his life. The poor fellow soon obtains a better appointment. With it come fresh offers of money. Finding all hope of escape gone, he wilfully shuts his eyes, and lets matters take their course, striving by a round of pleasures to drown thought and reflection.

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Such was the situation of poor Mackinnon, living like a prince, ever ready to lend to the needy, and to assist the struggling man. He had been the means of enabling many of his friends to accumulate fortunes; he had placed it in the power of several to return to Europe; yet for himself he could do nothing. He was far too deeply involved to hope for escape, so his only solace was to make those around him as happy as he could, himself a willing sacrifice at the altar of hospitality.

Sandy Frazer, the indigo planter, was the very reverse of the picture I have just drawn. Brought up by prudent parents, whom he had lost in early life, Sandy came to India with a strict determination "to make money." Far from attempting, by a sudden or great speculation, to enrich himself, he had toiled on, guilty of no extravagance, indulging in no excess. Year after year his moderate profits had accumulated till he had become a very rich man. There is an old line in Latin which tells us that the love of money grows with the possession of it. Far from being contented with the thousands he had amassed, Frazer, used to the fatigues of business, so accustomed to them as almost to like them, still remained in India, remitting occasional sums to Europe to purchase estates he was never likely to behold. In a word, Sandy was a prudent Scotchman, a term which in India signifies a rich one.

Tom Martin, of the native infantry, whom I have mentioned as making up our party, was one of those beings whom we occasionally meet with in every society. Interrupted in his studies by the receipt of a military commission, and consequently but superficially grounded in any one branch of

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education, he yet possessed a smattering of all. Anxious to be looked upon as a good fellow, he was ever ready to fight, to bet, to ride a race, or join a shooting party. At cards he played higher than he could afford; at table he drank deeper than his senses warranted. Fond of excitement, careless as to results, without any fixed principles, he had left his home, and having heard a great deal about philosophy, affected to be a philosopher, and, in order to prove the fact, at once plunged into open atheism. Like most persons of this stamp, he continually annoyed his friends, when a little elated by liquor, by pouring forth his horrible and blasphemous doctrines, to the annoyance of those around him.

Such was the case on the evening I allude to. Cards and supper over, an animated conversation on sporting topics induced Martin to drink deep. He lost his better senses; and, as we sat out on the open deck smoking our hookahs and sipping our loll shrob, he burst forth into one of his anti-christian tirades. We endeavoured to check him. It was impossible. We tried to reason with him. He actually silenced us with his daring impieties. Our ideas of right and wrong, our beliefs in rewards and punishments, he laughed to scorn. At length, with an air of braggadocio, he thus concluded one of his speeches:—

"I 'll tell you what it is, my friends. Your bigotry shall soon be upset. I will show you how I mock your foolish fears, and defy the powers you believe in. It is only a first and slight proof of my bitter scorn for the precepts which doting monks have instilled into us. Here goes for heaven or for hell, if such places exist!" and he sprang at once into the water.

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This disgusting boast, though it annoyed us, filled us with little alarm, since we knew there was not sufficient water to drown even a child, and the bottom was composed of a hard gravel; besides which Martin was a tiptop swimmer, so we only considered the act as an insensate proof of inebriety. Presently, however, we looked out for him. He had plunged beneath the surface, to which he did not rise again. We waited a minute or two—he still remained immersed. We called for torches, thinking he might have dived and risen at some distance. We shouted to him, but all in vain. Some of our boatmen jumped into the lake at the same spot where Martin had just sprung in. The water was scarcely up to their middles. They waded about, but without success. We were dreadfully alarmed, yet we still hoped he was playing us some trick. Morning broke, and we returned to our bungalow; but, alas! no tidings of Martin. The pond was well dragged, but the body could not be found, and we consequently set it down in our own minds that our companion had made for shore in order to alarm us. Three days afterwards we again entered the boat, and were sitting on our open deck. The moon was shining brightly. Suddenly Mackinnon started up. He had seen dimly an object in the water. He called our attention. It was the body of Tom Martin floating on the surface. His face was deadly pale, and seemed to wear an expression of pain. His every feature, clearly defined by the bright lunar rays, seemed ghastly and terrifying beyond anything that can be imagined. We dragged the body on board. In silent grief we buried it next day. Some of our party were then wild, and perhaps too wild, in their beliefs. The warning, however, was not lost upon them.

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THE CRAMMED TURKEY.

"BURRA SAHIB (my master) in him country he great man; great man him fadder."

"My master much more great," replied Lieutenant Smith's khitmutgar. "Your master only Ensign Sahib; my master lootenant: lootenant sit higher than Ensign Sahib."

"Not care for that; my massa fadder great man in him country. He ride in palanquin with wheels, and dine with old Lady Bibby* Company. My massa sit next Colonel Sahib;" and the irritated servant of Ensign Brown endeavoured to substitute his master's plate for that of Lieutenant Smith's.

In the midst of this scuffle I entered, and desired the same place to be reserved on either side of my table for the rival great men; thus satisfying the angry servants, who had been disputing nearly half an hour about the respective precedence of their masters.

To explain the circumstance I must inform the reader that it is usual, when a bachelor invites a party of friends to dinner, for each guest to bring his servant to attend on him, his own plates, knives, spoons, and forks. The entertainer only provides the room, the furniture, the lights, and meal. In India, as in every place where no decided precedence exists, much more fuss is made about artificial rank than in circles

* Meaning the East India Company, who are supposed by the natives to be an old lady. *Bibby* means mistress.

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where real and hereditary right of assumption exists. On this head some gentlemen may perhaps be careless; but their servants are sure to stick up for their masters, and quarrel for the consequence and dignity of their employers.

Such were the feelings which gave rise to the quarrel I have just narrated. My decision, however, calmed them, and I then addressed them on another subject. After begging of them each to count the spoons, &c., he brought, I informed them that I had a *chokedar*, or policeman, in attendance to search for the robber if any plate should be lost. Not that I doubted their honesty, but, as I knew their habits, I was aware that they considered it perfectly justifiable, in case of any of their masters' forks or other goods being mislaid, instantly to seize and purloin those of any other person present to make up their proper number. This had given rise to several severe disputes, so I warned them beforehand that any one guilty of such a fault should not escape with impunity, from the first *khitmutgar* (butler) to the lowest *mussolgi* (light bearer).

The shades were put round the candles, the cover to each glass placed on it, and the meal was served. The dinner being one of ceremony, given by me to our colonel, was of the first order, consisting of three or four kinds of fish, innumerable styles of curry, roast kid, a florikin, and snipes in every way, crowned by the most *recherché* of all dishes—a boiled turkey.

It is true we each (that is to say, every officer in cantonment) kept these birds, and endeavoured to fatten them; but somehow or other we all failed, and our poultry remained thin and miserable. The colonel instantly eyed the splendid bird

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with keen envy, for during several months he had vainly, and at a great expense, endeavoured to produce such a dainty. I confess I was puzzled to know where my *khansumah* had got it, for I well knew I had none of the kind.

By and by my delighted, but curious guest turned round to my *khansumah*, and, after praising his talent as a turkey-feeder, begged to know his system. The man merely shrugged up his shoulders, and began tittering. A look, however, from me, and he again recovered his respectful demeanour, and assured the colonel he only fed his poultry in the usual manner. This, however, seemed scarcely to satisfy the other, who, after a pause, again turned to the servant, and, having obtained my permission to do so, offered him a rupee to call the next day on his (the colonel's) *khansumah*, and instruct him in the proper manner of fattening turkeys. This handsome proposal, to my great surprise, was received with a roar of laughter by my usually steady servant, who rushed from the room. For a moment I was alarmed; I thought the man had taken leave of his senses. I said as much to the colonel, and then left the chamber to ascertain the fact. On seeing me enter the verandah with a stern countenance the still laughing offender fell down on his knees, and, between sobs and cries, began to roar out for pardon and mercy. This, however, I refused to grant until I heard a satisfactory explanation of his strange behaviour.

"Oh! don't *chabook* me" (horsewhip me); "don't send me away. Pardon me, pardon me, good master; but I could not help laughing when the colonel told me to teach his feeder how to cram turkeys."

"And what was there so comical in that?"

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"Good master, don't be angry—don't look stern—don't send me away!"

"Tell the truth, and I 'll forgive you."

"Oh, sir, pardon me for laughing; but I bought that turkey this morning from the colonel's *khansumah!*"

I confess I could not help smiling too; but, fearful of telling the truth to my guest, I returned to table, and assured him my poor servant was in strong convulsions, probably the effect of a *coup de soleil.*

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A GRIFFIN.

JERRY LANGSTAVE was about as unsophisticated a *griffin* (a term always applied to new comers in India) as ever exchanged a cloth coat for a white *chunamed* (starched) jacket. He was, however, a good fellow, and every one liked him. Ever ready to lend his cash to a friend, or to accept of a bad bet from a knowing acquaintance, Jerry was universally and deservedly popular.

Jerry's arrival in India was attended with peculiar circumstances—circumstances which I shall at once relate, and show the character of the man. When the vessel which bore him to Bengal arrived near Garden Reach, for some particular reasons—reasons with which I am wholly unacquainted—it was deemed advisable for her to come to anchor—a manœuvre which ill accorded with the impatient disposition of Master Langstave, who instantly hired a boat to convey him without loss of time to Calcutta.

I have before in similar sketches attempted to set forth the beauties which now struck the eye of the enchanted youth. The picturesque scenery, the strange costumes, the fairy-like bungalows, threw Jerry into raptures, and he blessed the goddess Fortune for having sent him to such a land of delight.

After thus skimming along for about half an hour Langstave perceived a dark object floating on the water, over which a bird of prey kept continually hovering. Now, curiosity

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formed a prominent feature in Jerry's character, so he desired his *dandies* (boatmen) to pull towards the mysterious subject which had attracted his attention. The men explained to him in Hindostanee what the said object really was; but, as our friend was wholly unacquainted with that language, he gained little instruction from the explanation, and still persevered in ordering his people to row towards the dark mass. An Indian may remonstrate, he may hang down his head and look grave, but he never positively disobeys the order of a superior; so in a few minutes the boat cut across the stream, and scared away the vulture, which, with a cry of rage, flew off as the little bark came near. Jerry started back with horror; his first suspicions were in a moment awfully confirmed, and he gave himself much credit for his foresight and determination. Yes, the object before him was a dead body, half putrid, sadly mutilated—the mortal remains of an unlucky native were floating down with the tide. In a moment Jerry jumped at the conclusion that the corpse thus strangely found was that of some murdered man, basely assassinated on shore, and thrown into the river to conceal the crime. Langstave made up his mind in a moment, determined to sift the matter to the bottom. He instantly ordered his boatmen to lift the body into the boat: this they one and all refused to do with undisguised looks of horror. He had a brace of pistols in his belt; he pulled them out, and, presenting them at the head of the principal dandy, swore roundly he would shoot him if he did not instantly comply with his wishes. Every native does not understand English, but every native understands the danger of disobeying a man with a cocked pistol in his hand; so, with many exclamations of annoyance

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and disgust, they managed with their oars and the assistance of a rope (for they seemed afraid to touch the corpse), to drag the body into the boat. As they rowed along Jerry examined the remains before him, and felt every instant more convinced that a foul murder had been perpetrated. The conduct of his boatmen also perplexed him. Surely they could not have been privy to the dreadful act; yet from their evident wish to get rid of the body, their averted looks, their steady refusal to touch the now inanimate form, the way in which they called out to other dandies on the river, and the sudden flight of those persons so addressed, began to instil strange misgivings into the mind of Langstave.

Presently they arrived at the principal *ghaut* (landing-place) at Calcutta. Directly their freight was perceived every boat pulled away, and left the spot clear for Jerry to step on shore.

This done, he desired his men to take up the body, and follow him to the office of the chief magistrate. In another instant they had leaped on shore, and fled as fast as their legs could carry them; so our friend, *bon gré mal gré*, was left with but two alternatives, that of abandoning the affair altogether, or taking up the corpse himself, and carrying it to the police-office. He chose the latter, and, to the horror of every one he met, strutted off with the body of the black man dangling over his shoulders. Some thought him mad, others believed he thus acted for a bet; but one and all gave him a wide berth, and refused to share the odious task he had undertaken.

Arrived at the magistrate's, he was instantly admitted, and, after laying down his ghastly burden, he at once explained the whole circumstance, and the suspicions they had given rise to.

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"So you picked up this body in the river?"

"I did."

"What said your boatmen to you when you did so?"

"They grumbled and objected, I believe; but, as I don't understand Hindostanee, I'm not quite sure."

"And you have no reason for believing that this man was murdered beyond the fact of finding him in the water?"

"None; but surely is not that strong proof presumptive? Who but a murderer would thus dispose of a body, indeed, unless the unlucky man committed suicide?" and a new light seemed to break on the mind of Langstave.

"Are you aware that at least the third part of the population of Bengal are thrown into the river by their relations after death? that such is considered the most religious mode of disposing of their mortal remains?"

Jerry looked very blank as he whispered out a negative.

"Well, then, my dear sir, allow me to inform you that such is the fact. As you proceed further up the river you will meet with hundreds of dead bodies daily; and now the only thing you have to do is to return this carcass to the water as soon as possible, lest you are accused of sacrilege."

"Good gracious! you don't say so? Will you kindly order some of your people to take it down and chuck it into the river?"

"I am sorry to say that is impossible. No native would touch it: he would lose caste if he did."

"What, then, am I to do?"

"Why, as you brought it here, so take it back again."

Jerry was now in a most unpleasant predicament. When he had borne it along before he was sustained in his dreadful

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task by a belief that he was doing a sacred duty, an act of justice; but now to parade through the streets with the dead body of a native, with the folly of having picked it up in the river attached to the act, was more than even Jerry could calmly contemplate. He was about to make some remonstrance, when his late boatmen suddenly burst into the room, and, throwing themselves on their knees before the chief magistrate, began to call out, "*Mofcarow, mofcarow! burra sahib, mofcarow!*" (Justice, justice! great sir, grant us justice!)

Presently their statement was made, and the high magistrate, turning to Langstave, addressed him.

"Had you been longer in the service, sir, it would be my duty to report this strange case to the civil authorities for their notice; but as you are but just arrived I am willing to believe you have erred from ignorance, rather than from any design to injure; therefore——"

Here Langstave would have spoken, but the magistrate interrupted him.

"Don't speak, sir: you will only make the case worse. You have committed a sad offence, although, I hope, unconsciously. By drawing a dead body from the river you have been guilty of sacrilege; you have insulted the religion of the natives, which is strictly forbidden by our laws to be interfered with. By placing the said body in the boat you have defiled it; no Hindoo can ever make use of it again. Think yourself lucky, therefore, that I am inclined to deal mercifully towards you."

Langstave once more breathed.

"Look ye, sir, for the dishonour you have brought upon

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these poor men you must pay two gold mohurs (£4 sterling); for their boat and its appurtenances, two hundred rupees (£20 sterling); to which add another gold mohur, and I will get an English sailor I am about to release from prison to carry down these putrid remains, and throw them back into the river."

Now it so happened that poor Jerry had not above thirty pounds in the whole world. He was, therefore, about to reply; but a look from the justice gave him a hint that it would be better to pay the money and have done with it; so, with a look of sorrow, he thrust his hand into his pocket, and was about, after paying down five-sixths of all his worldly store, to depart, when the worthy magistrate managed to whisper to him,—

"Take my advice, my young spark, and leave Calcutta as soon as you can; for, depend upon it, in this city you will be sure to find yourself the reviled and abhorred of the natives, the butt of ridicule of your own countrymen. But, wherever you roam, never interfere with religious customs—never volunteer to pick up dead natives."

"Thank ye," replied Jerry; "your advice is so good that I promise to abide by it. They may stuff, roast, and eat each other, without my ever taking the trouble to interfere again."

"*Bohut atchar*," rejoined the magistrate. "*Khansumah*, show the gentleman out;" and, as Jerry left the hall, he heard the worthy dispenser of justice audibly exclaim to a friend who stood near,—

"What a griffin!!"

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THE NATIVE SENTINEL.

THERE are persons who argue (and the French nation warmly encourages the idea) that a soldier should be a reasoning animal, that the powers vested in him should be used only as occasion may require, and that in the exercise of his duty he should always consider every order received by him as discretionary. The majority, however, of military men consider that a soldier should be little more than an automaton when under arms, and I confess I am of the same opinion. In his private acts it is all very well for him to cavil and to argue, and change his mind as often as he likes; but when habited and armed, and placed under the orders of one who is at least supposed to know better than himself, I consider that the soldier should blindly obey whatever directions he may receive, and act strictly as he may be commanded to do. It is for this reason I so much admire the native troops of India. A sepoy is a part, a willing and active part, of his officer. He knows no will but that of his leader. He hesitates not to do whatsoever that leader tells him, so long as he finds his own danger shared by him. It is true that the instant the European officer wavers or flies the sepoy does the same; but into the very cannon's mouth, if led by his superior, the native soldier will boldly follow. He requires no exciting cause of war to goad him on to valour; no cry of "*Vive l'empereur!*" to hurry him on to glory; quietly and steadily he advances at the bidding of his officer, nor does he

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turn his back till that officer desires him to retreat, only checking his onward career when death or the commands of his superior compel him to do so.

I remember, when quartered at Delhi, that many things had been stolen from the officers' quarters; a series of petty thefts had put us all on the *qui vive*. These depredations were evidently committed by some stranger, who after night-fall managed to get into cantonments. Every avenue to our lines was carefully watched by sentries, with strict orders that any one approaching and refusing to give the countersign was immediately to be fired on. These orders were published in the bazaar and throughout the neighbourhood, to prevent any untoward accident arising out of their strict fulfilment.

One evening I had strolled into Major M'Pherson's quarters, and was enjoying a hookah with that distinguished officer (than whom a braver or better never lived), when we were suddenly aroused from our sleepy employment by the sharp report of a musket. We both started up, and rushed out to inquire the cause; for I need not add, for the information of the military portion of my readers, that nothing but a cause of importance can justify the discharge of fire-arms in a garrison town; and, finding that the sound proceeded from a central fort about two hundred yards off, we started at full speed to inquire into the circumstance.

When we came up we beheld—by the light of torches, carried by persons who, like ourselves, had been attracted to the spot by the report—a dead body stretched on the ground, while across it lay a soldier, apparently insensible. The blood was still streaming from the wound of the man who had been shot, and stained the white trousers of the sepoy. I

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instantly gave orders that he should be raised up, in order to ascertain whether he was really dead or merely in a swoon.

As his countenance met my view I started back with horror. His eyes, frightfully distended, exhibited so much of the white that my blood curdled as I gazed upon him; his lips were drawn upwards and downwards, showing his ivory-like teeth, which chattered in fearful insanity; and, as he struggled with those who attempted to lift him up, and strove hard again to throw himself on the corpse before him, I beheld with horror, for the first time in my life, what the faculty, I believe, entitle *risus sardonicus*, working on the lower part of a face whose fierce and glaring eye denoted a state of raving madness.

The frantic gestures and rending screams, the menacing threats, alternated with feeble sighs and piteous entreaties for mercy, uttered by the poor fellow before us, whom I well knew, and whom I had seen in perfect health only a few hours before, shocked me to a degree I cannot describe: I was almost deprived of the presence of mind requisite to make instant inquiry into the cause of the scene before us.

The unhappy maniac led away, I instantly set about investigating the circumstance, which turned out to be as follows:—

Jesseree, the poor fellow I have mentioned, had been posted on sentry about an hour before midnight, with strict orders to fire on any one who might approach without giving the password. Scarcely had two-thirds of his allotted time to remain on this duty elapsed when a footstep was heard stealthily approaching. The sentinel challenged; but, instead of receiving a reply, the intruder only seemed to advance quicker; a second time, and still silent; a third, and Jesseree,

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levelling his musket, fired at the individual, now seen within twenty yards by the uncertain light of a more than usually obscure night. The report had not yet died away when Jesseree heard a cry of agony, and the well-known voice of his old father call out the name of his beloved son. He threw down his musket, and madly rushed up to his victim; but it was too late—the unintentional parricide had taken deadly aim; and with that cry of affection which had caused the child to recognise his parent, life had fled for ever from the breast of the old Indian, who had travelled on foot through dangerous woods, and swam the most rapid rivers, once more to behold, as he had hoped, his darling son. Nearly six hundred miles had he travelled, through difficulties innumerable, to embrace once more the life of his declining age. He had heard his loved voice when in English (as is customary) his son had challenged, and, not understanding the meaning of the demand, had rushed forward to press to his fond heart that son whose fatal aim had in an instant deprived the author of his being of life. He had fallen dead attempting to utter his name.

The next morning I fervently uttered an exclamation of thanksgiving when I heard that death had relieved the maniac from his sufferings.

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THE PRACTICAL JOKE.

Poor Aylmer, whose premature old age and grave manner have evidently been brought on by deep sorrow, was once the merriest fellow in the Bengal army. Alive to every species of fun, ready to join in every amusement, he was the acknowledged leader of all the high spirits of the presidency. A practical joke, however, was the cause of his present woe-begone appearance; the consequences of a moment's hilarity have embittered for ever his future years. I will relate the circumstances in a few words.

A grand dinner had been given by the mess to Colonel Green on his departure for England, and, as is usual on such occasions, we had drunk deeply. Hodgson's pale ale and Carbonell's claret had done their best to upset us, but not a man had yielded to their powers. Midnight had struck; its chimes had been unheeded. Our honoured guest had departed, yet no one thought of moving. We sat, in the spirit of true good-fellowship, talking over the merits of our late commander. There are some men, however, who get naturally cross as they imbibe too much wine. Others, though wound up to the highest pitch of good-nature, will become so sensitive as to imagine the slightest contradiction to be a grave offence, an attack upon their honour.

On the night in question Tom Townley, my best, my most valued friend, got into a foolish argument with James Sewell about the spelling of the word "wagon" or "waggon." The

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dispute was so laughable that, instead of sending for a dictionary and deciding the question, on which the parties had made heavy bets, we foolishly fomented the drunken quarrel to enjoy the fun, imagining that in the morning both gentlemen would have forgotten their dispute. We must have been worse, however, than madmen thus to suffer two brother officers heated by wine to proceed in their argument. The consequences were obvious. In a moment of irritation, wholly unconscious of what he was doing, Townley struck Sewell, who, starting up, demanded instant satisfaction for the insult he had received. We now too late perceived our error, and the more sensible portion of the company proposed instantly to break up, and endeavour in the morning to arrange matters. It is true a blow is an insult not to be got over; such an offence demands blood as an expiation; but there are cases (and we hoped the present one was of the number) in which the unconsciousness of the parties might justify the affair being made up, and the old hands therefore advised a forcible abduction of the belligerents, who still, however, kept calling out for pistols.

To this moment I cannot account for my feelings on this occasion. I could not help desiring to push the fun, as I called it, still further, and therefore not only sided with Sewell when he declared he *ought* to have instant satisfaction, but actually went off and brought the weapons they desired. The sight of these made them still more clamorous for an immediate encounter. Fools were, alas! found to back up my opinion, and in a very few minutes, the majority of our officers having withdrawn in disgust, our two friends were placed opposite each other in the long gallery, which reached from

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one end to the other of the right wing of the barracks of Fort William. Twelve paces only divided them, and the mock seconds stood ready. The parties were about to fire, when, with the proverbial cunning of drunkenness, one of them found out that there was no ball in his pistol. We now began to see that our joke was rather a serious one, and endeavoured to separate the duellists; but, alas! it was too late. "They were there to fight," they said, "and fight they would." Finding them thus obstinate I slipped back into the mess-room, and, taking up some new bread, soon rolled up some pellets the size of pistol-balls, which blackening, I hastened back with, and, winking to my companions, proceeded to put them into the pistols. Highly delighted at my stratagem, proud of my ingenuity, I stepped back, and, laughing inwardly at the trick I had played them, gave the word "Fire!" Townley fell. I of course supposed he had done so from mere agitation, and, with a grin on my countenance, ran to raise him up. Imagine my horror (my blood runs cold even now while I relate) when I beheld the life-stream pouring forth in a warm current from his side. Sewell, sobered by the misfortune of his friend, also rushed forward. Every eye was fixed on me, as if I had been the murderer, and, indeed, I really felt that I was.

"I thought you told me they were *sham* balls," reproachfully demanded Somerset. "You said they were mere bread pellets."

"Good God, sir! what have you done?" demanded another.

My conscience accused me louder than all. That poor Townley was wounded severely was now but too evident.

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"Run for the surgeon," cried I, half distracted, "and I 'll endeavour to stanch the wound till he comes."

In another moment every one was off, and I was left alone with my victim; for to this instant I look upon myself, though unintentionally, yet actually as his assassin. I attempted to plug the wound; it bled faster and faster. I held my hand to it; the deluging blood was too strong to be thus stopped. Poor Townley had not spoken, but his cheek had assumed a livid hue, and his head, as it lay on my shoulder, became a heavy weight. I called loudly for help, but no one came; I screamed, but no one heard me. For an instant the sufferer opened his eyes and looked up, feebly murmuring, "God bless you!" then, closing his eyes, he seemed to sink into a tranquil sleep. Presently I saw lights approaching; a crowd came running forward, in advance of whom rushed the doctor. He took him from my arms, and uttered, to my recollection, but a single sentence. "It is all over: Sewell, you had better be off instantly."

He heard no more. For six months he was confined to his bed with a brain fever. At the end of that time, incapable of the fatigue of serving, he returned to Europe, where he wanders a living beacon to deter others from indulging in the senseless license of a practical joke.

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THE BLACK PROPHET.

I WAS quartered at Berhampore in the —th native infantry in the year 18—; the king's —th foot made up the garrison. A better set of men and officers was never collected together. The greatest harmony existed between us; the many feuds which arise between Her Majesty's troops and those of the Company were unknown amongst us. The grand objects of our society seemed to be to amuse and be amused. In India the evenings always pass pleasantly enough, but the mornings often hang heavily on our hands. Racket and billiards are the only pastimes for idle persons. These, however interesting at first, become dull by frequent repetition; and as we have no books to fly to as in Europe, no power of walking or of riding out under the broiling sun, the hours between breakfast and dinner-time often seem so wearisome as to force the person fond of excitement to seek out new sources of enjoyment.

I was lolling on my cane couch smoking my hookah, alternately glancing at the *punkah* over my head and the often-read pages of an old "Gentleman's Magazine," when my head bearer walked in and requested leave to absent himself for an hour.

In England such a demand would not have surprised me but in Bengal such a solicitation was so novel, I could not

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help asking the man his reasons for wishing to go out, especially at an hour when he might be required to attend my palanquin.

"It is to go to the bazaar, sahib," replied the man.

"You wish to make purchases there; if so, why not wait till a later hour?"

"Such is not my wish. I do not go there to buy anything, sahib."

"To see your family, then?"

"No, sahib; I have no family there. My surviving relatives are at Moorshedabad."

"What do you, then, go to seek?"

The man hesitated a moment ere he replied,—

"I wish to consult the Brahmin Jesserie Poore."

"And who is this Jesserie?"

"The great soothsayer, sahib; he who knows and foretells the destiny of every disciple of Vishnu."

"And you believe in his power?"

"Sahib?" replied he interrogatively, as if doubting the possibility of the question I had put.

"Can he also predict the fate of Europeans?"

"No, sahib; nor will he ever hold converse with them. He is forbidden to do so by a vow."

"Still I should like to go and see him."

"Impossible."

A thought suddenly struck me. I ordered my palanquin, which in a few minutes stood ready in my verandah.

"Take me to Jesserie's," said I, as I jumped in.

My head bearer approached, and, bowing his head, he lowly

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muttered, "I have already said to my master that the Brahmin will not receive the white stranger."

"I know it; so hark ye. Take me to the door of the place where this Jesserie lives, where I can see all that passes. On your way undo some of your *cummerbunds* (livery sashes) and turbans, close the doors of the palanquin, and set it down carelessly, as if it were empty; and if asked, say you have left me at the racket court, and on your way home you have stopped to learn your future fortune. Nay, not a word. There is a rupee for you; and mind, make him tell you your fate, and let me be near enough to hear it." And so saying, to stop all further remonstrance, I closed the doors, and, crying out "*Juldi*" (go on), was soon *en route* for the bazaar.

According to my orders I was soon set down at the open entrance of the mud hovel in which the "wise man" sat squatted on his calves, with half a dozen natives smoking their *hubble bubbles* (the lowest grade of hookah) round him. By peeping through the Venetian blinds in the panel of my palanquin I was enabled to see and hear all that passed; so, peering out, I began eagerly to glance around me.

The Brahmin, or "holy man" (for he was not, I believe, a regular priest), sat perfectly silent in the centre of the floor, with his eyes firmly fixed on an opening in the roof, as if mentally piercing the sky, which was perceptible through the aperture. His right arm was fixed straight up, and the finger-nails of his doubled fist had grown through the back of it. This, I am aware, may appear improbable to a European; but there are few who have been in India that have not seen similar self-inflicted tortures, the consequence of early re-

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ligious vows. The man before me had held up his arm probably from his very earliest youth: it had now *grown* in that position. Unless it were broken nothing could again bring it down. His clenched hand had probably been contemporary with the other distortion; for he seemed to feel no pain, though, as I said before, the nails had grown actually through the flesh, and come out at the back of his hand. His cheeks showed the scars of many self-inflicted gashes. He was perfectly naked from head to foot, but wore a strange-looking necklace and armlet, with a very large rough turquoise round his neck. He was evidently very tall, though, in his present posture, I could not accurately tell his height. His age was about sixty.

When my sirdar-bearer approached and made known his wishes, the holy man, ere he replied to him, muttered several prayers; then, taking a small earthenware pot of water, he dipped his fingers in it, and sprinkled some on the ground and some on the foreknowledge-seeker; then, throwing some yellow powder into a few hot ashes which stood beside him, he began muttering extremely fast a number of adjurations (which were, of course, unintelligible to me), rolling his eyes about all the time like a furious maniac. The incantations complete, the following was about the substance of his queries and prognostics:—

"You are unhappy?"

"I am."

"You have lost your children?"

"I have."

"Your wife is sick, your mind is sore—no riches accumulate beneath your roof."

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"None."

"Yet your master is kind, and your own health good?"

"Yes."

"What is your desire with me? I tell you the present—would you know more?"

"I would."

"What seek you to know?"

"The cause and remedy of those evils which beset me."

Here he dropped the rupee I had given him close to the Brahmin, who affected not to notice it, but began again muttering his incantations, and throwing his yellow powder around him. Suddenly he started up, twisting quickly round and round. At length he stopped with his face towards the east, and, after a few apparently painful convulsions, desired the sirdar to propound such questions as he thought fit.

"How long have I to live?"

"Seven days," unhesitatingly replied the sage.

"What cause shall occasion my death?"

"Vengeance for the wrongs you now suffer."

"By whom are those wrongs brought?"

"The evil eye of a stranger."

"A native of Bengal?"

"No; a white man."

"And when shall these persecutions cease?"

"Only when the evil eye is closed for ever."

"And how shall I recognise that eye?"

"'Tis the eye of the first white man you behold to-morrow after *tope duggah* (gun-fire)—I think it is a soldier's. Beware of it, and begone."

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And the soothsayer fell flat on his face, and began quickly uttering a string of prayers.

In a few moments my servant appeared, plunged in profound meditation, as if arguing within his own mind the probability or improbability of the Brahmin's assertions; then, suddenly turning round, he beckoned to his companions, and in less than a quarter of an hour I was again at home, puffing away at my hookah.

I spent a short time vainly endeavouring to point out to my sirdar the folly of believing in a palpable impostor—the danger of giving ear to such folly and nonsense. He only shrugged his shoulders, bowed low, and held his tongue. I could elicit no answer from him, and I evidently perceived the words of the fortune-teller had taken deep root in his mind.

At mess that day I told the story to several of my brother officers, who agreed on a future day to accompany me, and to try to induce the holy man to foretell our fate.

The next morning I was startled from my sleep by hearing the heavy volleys of infantry caused by the troops, who on this day were to fire a *feu de joie* in honour of the royal birthday. Now, as I ought to have been present on the occasion, this loud notice that I was fully half an hour too late was anything but agreeable; so I started up in my bed, and began roaring loudly (for we have no bells in officers' bungalows) for my sirdar, whose duty it was to awake me, with the kind intention of introducing my English horsewhip to his Bengalee shoulders. After shouting at least a dozen times my khitmutgar entered.

"Where is the sirdar-bearer?"

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"I know not, sahib."

"Desire him to come here directly."

The man went out, and returned in a short time afterwards.

"Sahib, the sirdar is nowhere to be found. I have vainly sought him everywhere; he has not been seen this morning."

"Well, then, assist me to dress as quickly as you can. But mark me well. By the waters of the Ganges and the hundred arms of Vishnu I'll *chabook* (horsewhip) him, as an example to all idle, bad servants."

My toilet completed, I called for my sash and sword, which in this hot climate we were allowed to wear with a white jacket and foraging cap. The first was brought to me, but the second could nowhere be found; the belt and the scabbard were in their regular places, but the sword itself was missing. This was indeed most strange, but, fancying that some one had played me a trick, I borrowed that of my next neighbour, who was on the sick list, and hastened off to make the best excuses I could to our commandant; who, being a good-natured man, not only forgave me, but invited me to breakfast.

The colonel had a pretty daughter and an English billiard-table, so I amused myself till late in the afternoon, when, just as I was leaving his house, I was horrified by the report being brought in of the murder of a European soldier—a circumstance almost unprecedented. The body had not been rifled: the crime could not, therefore, have been committed with any idea of robbery; and, as the deceased was known to be a most quiet, peaceable soldier, it was out of the question that the assassination could have arisen out of any quarrel or

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previous ill-will. It seemed, from the account given, that the poor fellow must have been quietly walking along the road to Moorshedabad, when some miscreant had come behind him and stabbed him to death.

The colonel desired me to accompany him to the spot where the barbarous act had taken place, in order to inquire into it. We therefore mounted our horses and galloped off.

We had scarcely proceeded half a mile when we met a party of the —th, bearing the body of their murdered comrade on a rough bier made of the branches of trees. The dead man had received several stabs in the back. A tear might be seen in the eye of more than one present as we examined the corpse. A low murmured threat of vengeance, if the assassin was ever found, was fervently uttered by the by-standers.

We again remounted our horses and went on, desirous of seeing the spot where the murder had been committed. Before we reached it, however, we perceived a crowd of English and natives. One of them, seeing us approach, ran forward to meet us. He told us that they had found and seized the assassin, still armed with the weapon of destruction, and were now bringing him into the cantonments.

The next person who came up to us brought with him the death-dealing blade. Imagine, readers, if you can, my horror on beholding the very sword I had lost in the morning—a loss I had related at breakfast to the colonel, to whom I now turned to identify the weapon before us; when, to my additional grief and amazement, I saw in the prisoner before me my long-tried and attached sirdar-bearer,

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his cummerbund and turban still smeared with the blood of his victim. My once valued and trusty servant stood before me a self-convicted and confessed murderer!

"*You* did this dreadful deed?" cried I, rushing up to him, unwilling to believe in the possibility of such an occurrence.

"Ay, sahib."

"And why?"

"*You* know, sahib."

I recoiled with surprise. The bystanders looked on me as if demanding an explanation. The criminal saw my astonishment. He continued:—

"You alone were present when the holy Jesserie told me of the evil eye. The soldier I slew was the first white person I beheld after gun-fire this morning. I had fled from your quarters that the lot might not fall on you, my dear master. I took with me your sword, and, feeling convinced that the soldier I first met possessed the evil eye which Jesserie told me was the cause of all my woes, I slew him. My family may now rest quietly and in happiness: the spell is removed. As to me, I know my fate—I wish not to avoid it. The holy man foretold it: you heard him, sahib."

I confess the man's calmness filled me with superstitious awe, and made me for a moment *almost* believe in the tenets of predestination.

The soothsayer's predictions were literally fulfilled. My unfortunate sirdar-bearer was hanged on a gibbet near Berhampore on the seventh day from that on which his fate had been foretold by the Black Prophet!

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THE BESIEGED.

HARRY WALTON was as good a fellow as ever breathed. I believe him to have done as many kind and generous acts as any man that ever visited India. His joviality was admitted, his courage undoubted; and yet on account of a mere quiz he took huff, and quitted the East. The facts were simply these.

Walton's sister was married to a Bengal civilian, who held a high office up the country. Harry was on a visit to his brother-in-law, when the latter was suddenly called down to Calcutta on urgent business. Ere he departed, however, he gave up the charge of his household to Walton, impressing on his mind that he ought to be extremely vigilant and circumspect, as there were several large bodies of *decoits* (banditti) roaming about the country, who had had the audacity to attack and plunder almost all the indigo-planters' houses in the neighbourhood, and would, more than probably, on hearing of the absence of the master of the establishment, attack in turn the house of the civilian.

Harry swore to die in its defence, laughed at the idea of being taken by surprise, and, having served for some time in the second battalion of the West Middlesex Acton Parish Branch of the Loyal and Local Volunteers, spoke of the affair *secundum artem*, styling the windows embrasures, the verandahs outworks, the doors sally-ports, and the sloping coverings of the balconies the glacis. The corner rooms were

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bastions, and the front of the house was the curtain. The *bobachees* (cooks), armed with spits, were to act as lancers; the *bheestees* (water-carriers) were to have their goat-skins filled with wine to refresh the troops, the khitmutgars were to form the main guard, and the palanquin-bearers were to lie in ambush outside, in order to cut off the retreat of the enemy. In a word, Thompson (the civilian of whom I speak) was so bothered by his military brother-in-law's jargon of "buttresses," "bastions," "pontoons," and "escalading," that he was glad to cut the conversation short, and start off on his journey.

As my tale might seem to touch upon the possible want of courage exhibited by Harry after the departure of his host, I will merely relate, in as few words as possible, an occurrence which took place that evening. It will at once, I trust, convince my reader that Walton was just about as daring as any man could possibly be.

The devotion to the fair sex of the British male residents in India, the almost idolatry in which a young and handsome Englishwoman is held by them, is beyond the conception of any lady accustomed even to the greatest homage which Europe can offer. It is all very well to quote as a miracle, as an act of superior gallantry, the riding one hundred miles to procure a bouquet, the gift of a necklace worth twenty thousand pounds, or the risk of life in defence of an injured female. God bless their poor-spirited hearts! Why, in India a man will do twice as much for a single smile. The following sketch will give a faint idea of this feeling:—

Five or six gentlemen, civil and military, had taken their tiffin at Thompson's on the day of his departure, and were strolling through the grounds with Mrs. Thompson, one of

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the loveliest women in Bengal, when they happened to approach a very deep *tank* (pond), in which several alligators were said to lurk. At the moment they did so, many of the party were lavishing the most fulsome compliments on their fair hostess, vowing they would readily lay down their lives to elicit a single smile from her fair lips. Mrs. Thompson enjoyed a joke, and particularly relished the idea which she had suddenly conceived of punishing the parasites around her. Determined to test their gallantry, she unhesitatingly threw her glove into the tank, declaring she would value him most who brought it back to her. In an instant every gentleman had plunged into the water. Yes, *every one:* even Harry Walton, who, in his eagerness to prove his admiration of *le beau sexe*, jumped in with the rest; nor was it till he found himself drowning (for, amongst other subjects which had escaped his memory, he had forgotten that he was totally unable to swim) that he suddenly remembered he was thus exposing his life to obtain a smile from his own sister! Poor fellow! He floundered about for several minutes, calling out most lustily for help, which being at length afforded him, he was drawn ashore more dead than alive, drenched to the skin.

A man who would thus wantonly risk his existence for the mere caprice of a lady could surely be no coward.

To return to my narrative. On the night of his ducking Harry slept soundly. It is true he had dreamt all kinds of things about earthquakes, and battles, and such-like stuff; but he never awoke till nine o'clock next morning, when he went down to breakfast.

How great was his astonishment on entering the room to find himself assailed on all sides with reproaches and sar-

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casms! He could scarcely believe his ears when he learnt that during the night the house had been besieged by a large body of decoits, that a brisk attack had met with a sharp repulse, that many volleys had been fired, that two robbers and one of the servants had been killed, and that the burra sahib's sirdar (the great man's head servant) had thumped at his (Walton's) door for at least half an hour, without being able to awake him; at least, so said the man. Others, however, less charitable, fancied Harry had been too "wide awake" to come forth and risk his precious person. Even the ladies had borne their part in the defence, and were now not backward in quizzing the poor volunteer.

That day was one of misery to the wretched Harry. The torments he endured from the banterers stung him almost to madness. Goaded by sneers, annoyed by inuendoes, Walton felt almost tempted to commit suicide.

Determined, however, that a recurrence of the scene should not take place, our hero, previously to retiring to bed, planted sentinels in every direction, and, leaving his door open, he sank down on his couch half dressed, his rifle ready loaded beside him, a light burning, and every precaution taken to insure his instant awaking at the slightest noise.

It was about twelve o'clock when a servant stole quietly in, and informed him that some decoits were said to be lurking about the grounds. Up jumped Harry; in a moment he was ready to sally forth. Having first desired that no one else should be called, he determined that, as he had not shared the glory of the preceding evening, the honour should now, at all events, be his own. Followed by a dozen armed men he sallied forth to beat the grounds. The moon shone brightly

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and cast long shadows. Once or twice Walton was almost deceived by fancying these umbrageous reflections to be human beings; but fortunately he reserved his fire till he could be quite sure of doing execution. Presently a murmur from one of the followers was heard. The man was proceeding down a hedgerow with the stealthiness of a cat.

"He is there, massa; we see him now. Don't fire yet, massa. Hush! he come this way."

"Where is he?" agitatedly demanded Harry.

"There, there—straight forward—just there!"

Walton raised his piece and fired: an unearthly noise sounded through the air. The natives rushed through the hedge just as the other European visitors in Thompson's house came up and joined the party.

"*Whar, whar!*" (wonderful, wonderful), cried the followers "Honour to the great chief!" added they, in their usual poetic manner of rehearsing loudly the triumphs of a European "*Whar, whar!* the great man has arisen—yes, he has arisen in his might, and shot a jackass!!!"

For the future happiness of poor Harry Walton the assertion was but too true. He had destroyed an innocent donkey, which was quietly feeding on the other side of the leafy fence.

The jest was too good to be easily given up or soon forgotten. Walton was so jeered about his magnanimous exploit, his noble defence of his brother-in-law's house, that he foolishly took huff, and, rather than bear the joke, threw up his appointment and returned to Europe.

THE END.

Hugh Barclay, Printer, Winchester.

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